

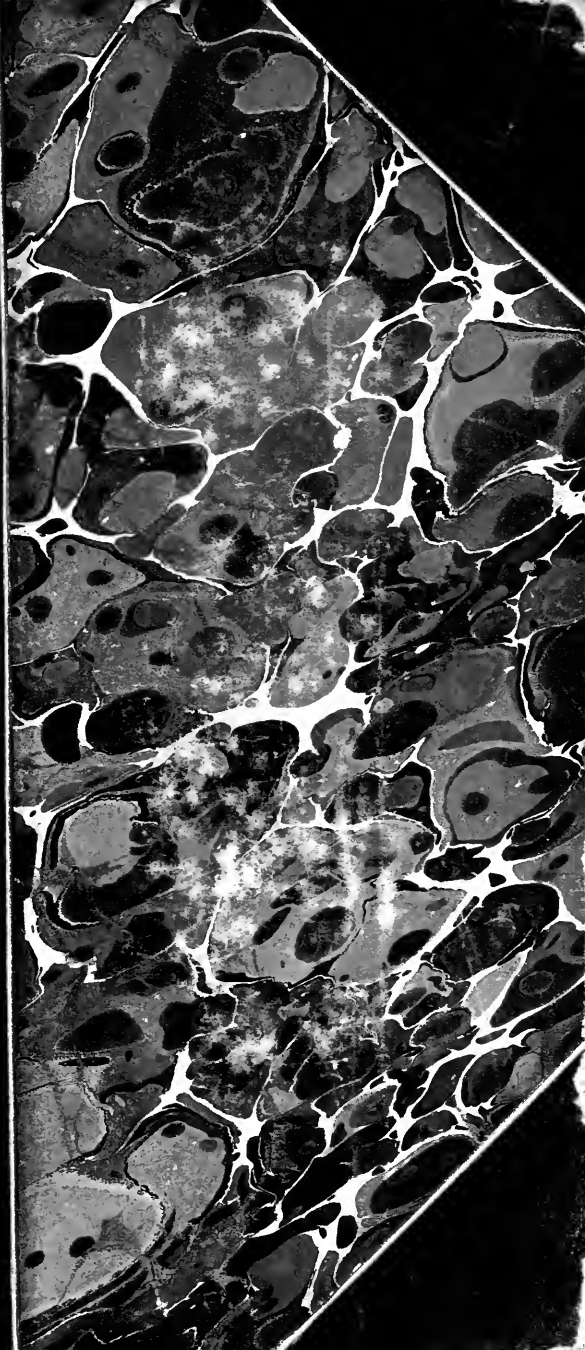
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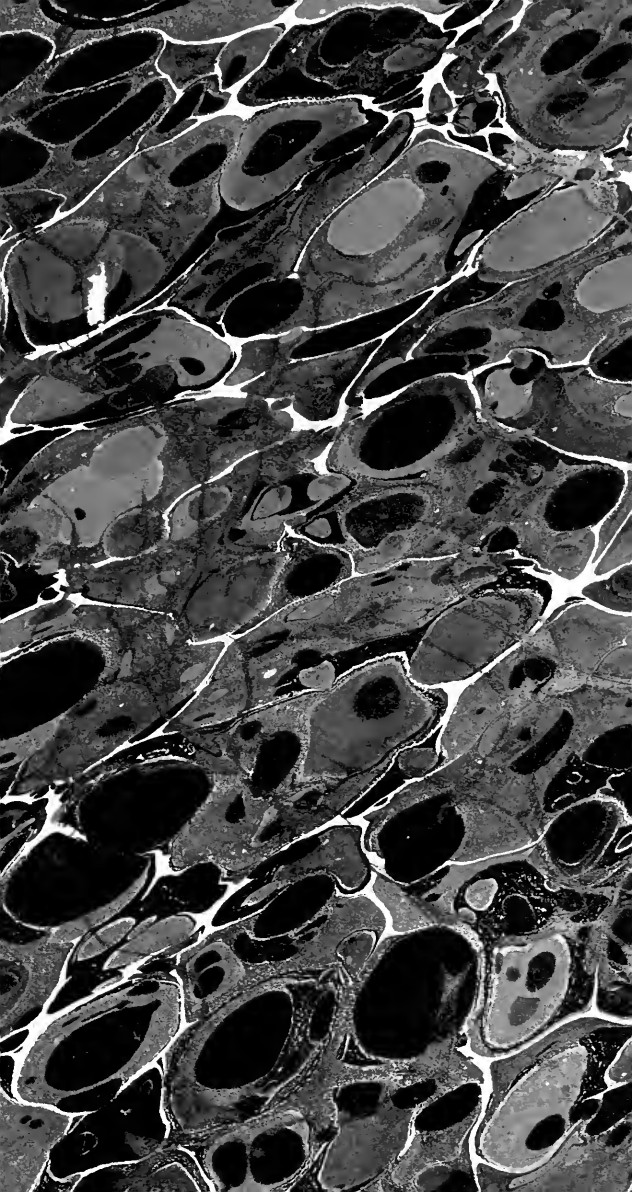
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THE
ITINERANT;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF AN ACTOR.



Second Edition,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



BY S. W. RYLEY.

“ The world’s a stage,

“ And all the men and women merely players :

“ They have their exits and their entrances ;

“ And one man, in his time, plays many parts.”

SHAKESPEARE.

London :

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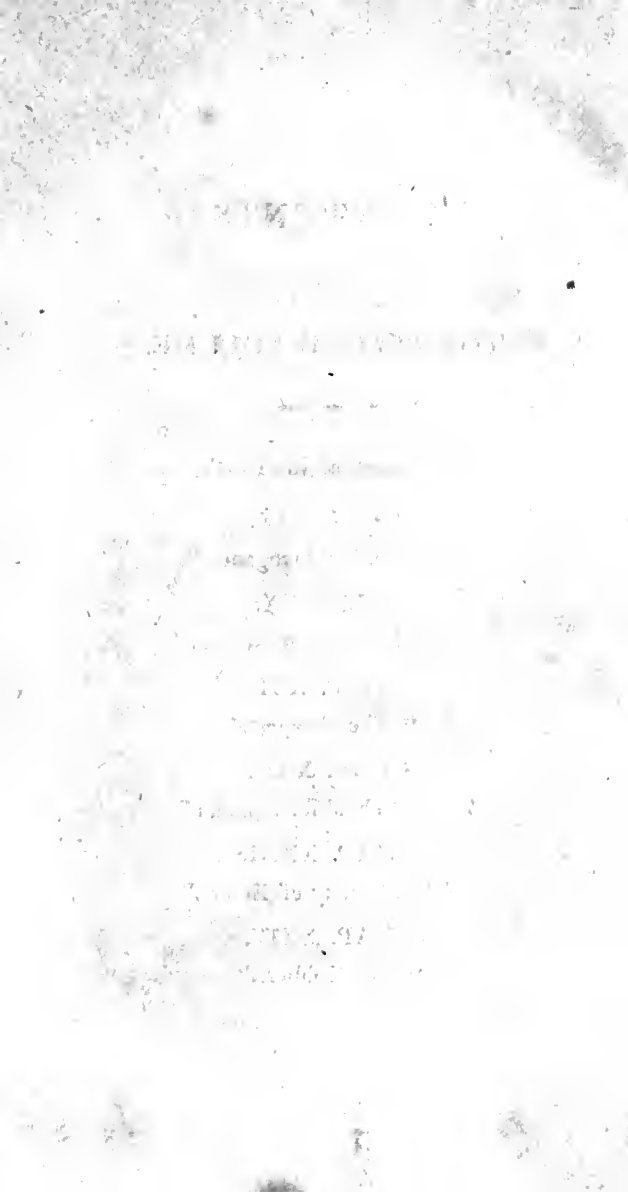
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THE
ITINERANT.

THE GIPSEYS OF THE NORTH.

“It’s a lie!” exclaimed the colonel, jumping over the table, and seizing the venerable clergyman by the throat, “it’s a lie, and I’ll make you eat your words.”

The company interfered—silence was obtained, and the reverend pastor of a small congregation, a few miles from Philadelphia, thus continued: “You see, gentlemen, how bad the cause—how weak the argument, that requires force to support it. My years, my religion, my disposition, are inimical to war of every kind. I speak the truth; in doing which, if you protect me from insult, I will proceed”—“Go on, go on,” was

echoed from every quarter; "go on, and we will protect you?"—"I repeat it," he continued, "Thou art the man! Full fifteen years have fled, since I have passed one pleasant hour. My wife, the darling of my heart, in whose affection I found a solace, amidst the cares of the world and the labours of my profession—my wife, I say"—whilst tears stole down his furrowed cheek—"was basely seduced, and her angelick mind poisoned by arts as numerous as base. Ere that destroyer, that fiend in human shape, set foot within my humble threshold, discontent never entered my dwelling—bliss forsook not my fire-side. This lordly owner of a princely domain, not contented with every gift that fortune could bestow, cast an envious eye on my poor humble cottage, and, under the fascinating veil of smiling friendship, plunged a dagger in that heart, that beat but to serve him."

The feelings of this aged orator, at the conclusion of his speech, overcame him; he sunk back in his chair, and whilst the rest of the company ran to his assistance, the honourable culprit made his escape. "Is he gone?" inquired the unhappy old man,

as he drew his hand from his brow, "God forgive him!—he carries no curse from me—the misery of an upbraiding conscience needs no addition."

This interview had such an awful effect upon the Rev. Charles Camelford; that, ere the dawn of morning, he was in a high fever, attended with delirium, which the physicians pronounced, from his age and debility, would, in all probability, prove fatal. His son, his only comfort, was immediately sent for, who arrived at the inn where this unfortunate *rencontre* had taken place, to behold a revered, an honoured parent raving with the frenzy of a maniac. Col. —; and his poor deluded Lucy, were the names his mind seemed to dwell upon; then would he call upon his son, his Charles, to revenge his injuries—to exterminate the destroyer of his honour—to restore his peace, by delivering a wife, and a mother, from the fell fangs of that ruthless monster, whose machinations had brought misery upon her here, and never-ending woe hereafter.

Charles, who had never heard any language from his father before, that was not

fraught with meekness and humility, and who was totally ignorant of his mother's dishonour, concluded his present wanderings merely the effect of disease. He honoured, he almost worshipped, his parent; the agony of such a mind may therefore be conceived, when he found him raving on the bed of sickness—perhaps of death!

Two days restored this victim of treachery to a perfect state of sanity; but that event was only the forerunner of death. His few remaining hours were employed in unfolding to a son the wickedness of a mother, and the dark, infernal arts which caused it. At the conclusion of his melancholy narrative, he strongly recommended patience and moderation—reprobated, with severity, all idea of revenge, and died, as he had lived, in full confidence of a glorious futurity.

After the remains of the worthy pastor were deposited in the burial ground, belonging to the church where he had officiated for the last twenty years, Camelford, now eighteen, began to reflect on his future plans. Upon a minute survey, he found the whole of his patrimony would not exceed two hun-

dred pounds, independent of an estate, left him by his maternal grandfather; and a military life having always had his preferable regard, he determined to offer his services to Gen. Washington, who was personally intimate with his late father, and had often joyfully invited Charles to defend his country against the oppressions of the English. His application had the wished-for effect; Gen. Washington, delighted with his ardour and military spirit, bestowed upon him a lieutenant's commission, and prognosticated future promotion.

Charles Camelford was, by nature, of an athletic form, which education had rendered strong and robust. An invincible courage, which knew not fear, marked his character from childhood; yet the terror this would have inspired, was softened by a suavity of manners, and a gentleness of demeanour, in the highest degree prepossessing. The openness, the generosity of his heart, appeared in every line of his intelligent countenance, which beamed with universal love and philanthropy.

His father was a man of education, in its most unlimited sense. Learning and accomplishments went hand in hand, and Charles received with avidity every benefit such extensive knowledge could bestow, from a parent, who thought every hour misspent, that was not dedicated either to his darling son's improvement, or to the service of his fellow-creatures. Devoted to a country life, those hours, not set apart for mental improvement, were by Charles dedicated to manly exercises, and included those not only of mere activity, but of labour and fatigue. Thus he was early initiated into what are generally termed field sports, but which, in America, are attended with bodily exertions, unknown in this country. In wrestling, cudgel-playing, cricket, and tennis, he was such an adept, that none of the neighbouring youths could at all contend with him; but his superiority was attended with such sweetness of manners, that, though acknowledged, it was without acrimony. The French and Latin languages were as familiar to him as English, to which he added a slight knowledge of Italian. On the violin, he was far from being a contemptible performer, though

nearly self-taught. His voice was tuned to harmony, even in speaking; but when he sung, it was indeed "A concord of sweet sounds."

Such was Charles Camelford, when he entered the army. An estate, of three hundred pounds per annum, would devolve upon him at the expiration of his minority, till which period it was held in trust for the support of an aged relative. Behold him now, fighting the battles of his country, with a courage and intrepidity that set fear at defiance; in every service of peculiar danger, Camelford was the first to offer himself. Were dispatches to be conveyed through the fire of the enemy, who so fearless as Camelford? Undaunted by terror—undismayed by fatigue—unappalled in the hour of danger—the most pusillanimous, whilst witnessing such heroick exploits, imbibed a portion of his warlike spirit.

Thus passed two years of Camelford's life—respected by his superiors, beloved by his equals, and looked up to, by the soldiers, with an enthusiasm bordering on adoration.

About this time he had the good fortune, at the head of a small skirmishing party, to render such essential service to his country, that he not only received publick thanks, but was promoted to the rank of captain.

One day, whilst on a foraging party, they passed a beautiful villa on the banks of the river, and Col. ——— was named as the owner. This intelligence acted on the frame of Camelford with the force of electricity; that name had never met his ear since the death of his father, and it gave him a shock he was ill prepared to receive. On further inquiry, he found the colonel, who was not then in actual service, lived at this fascinating spot, in a style of the utmost luxury, with a lady, who though she bore his name, was said to have no lawful claim to it.

His mind, the seat of honour, brooded over this intelligence. To suffer a mother thus to live, without an effort to reclaim her, was revolting to every feeling of his soul; but how to act, he knew not. Two of his most intimate friends were called to the consultation, who entered so warmly into his in-

terests and views, that they swore their lives, if necessary, should be sacrificed to serve him; at the same time recommending force as the only expedient that would be effective. Warm and ardent, with the imprudence of youth, he entered, without reflection, upon this plan.

At the time appointed, the three friends, with six assistant soldiers, sallied forth, and at the dead hour of night made a forcible entry, through a back window, into the colonel's house. The soldiers, without much trouble, secured the servants, who, buried in sleep, made little resistance; whilst Camelford and his friends, with a light, explored the way to the colonel's apartment, and there beheld his mother, in guilty slumbers, by the side of her paramour.

Camelford critically examined the features of the sleeping female. There could be no doubt of her identity; the resemblance to a highly-finished portrait, at the parsonage, together with a ring on her fore-finger, which he had many times heard his father describe, and regret the loss of, too fatally confirmed the truth.

Rage fired his soul; he roused the sleepers with a voice of thunder—loudly proclaimed a *mother's* infamy, a *father's* wrongs, and the vengeance of a *son*. “Madam,” said he, “come forth, and leave this house of guilt. Pollute not your soul by a longer residence with the miscreant who murdered your husband's peace, destroyed his life, and left your wretched son an orphan, for the finger of Scorn to point at.

‘Assume a virtue, if you have it not.’

Leave these hated walls, and, by a life of penitence, make some atonement for the injuries you have caused.”

The colonel, at the beginning of this speech, jumped out of bed, and seized his sword; but, finding who Camelford was, sunk into a chair, with the feebleness of guilt, till roused by his attempt to seize his mother, he once more stood in a posture of defence, and swore, nothing but death should part them.

Camelford drew his sword, and was upon the point of burying it in the breast of his adversary, when his mother rushed between

them, and received the fatal weapon in her own bosom. Rendered still more furious, he rushed on the terror-struck colonel, and, with one plunge, sent him to eternity.

The six assistant soldiers, in this scene of death, had been disguised with crapes, to save them from detection, and consequent punishment; and as *they only* were seen by the servants, no conjecture could lead to *suspicion*, except the uniform, which was fully described; upon further search, there was likewise found a white pocket-handkerchief, marked with the name of *William Thompson*. Gen. Washington, informed of this atrocious act, and the suspicion attached to his regiment, offered a reward of two hundred pounds, on conviction of the murderers; to which were added two hundred pounds more, from the heir of the deceased.

The handkerchief being sent to the commanding officer, Thompson was taken up, and on the point of being fully committed, when Camelford rushed into the court, and proclaimed his comrade's innocence.

“Who, then, is guilty?” said the magistrate.

“If such you call it,” answered Camelford, “I am the man! Wrought up to desperation by a mother’s shame, and a father’s murder, *I alone* committed this act of retribution, and glory in having purged the world of a monster! With respect to the female, she rushed between our swords, and received the death intended for another; and though my peace of mind is fled for ever, as far as regards her, I am *intentionally* innocent.”

Camelford and Thompson were both found guilty—one as the principal, the other for aiding and abetting.

There being no prison at hand, they were confined in a room sometimes occupied for that purpose, situated in the back and uninhabited part of a gentleman’s house—the building guarded by a file of soldiers, and three sentinels, with bayonets fixed, placed outside the door.

Camelford’s reflections may be imagined; but any attempt to describe them, must fall

infinitely short of the reality. The hand that would not willingly have destroyed an insect had wrought a double murder.

“ Murder ! most foul, as in the best it is,

“ But this—most foul, strange, and unnatural.”

A mother's murder !—the parent who bore, nurtured, and in his infancy had been most tender !—yet this parent he had, with parri-
cidal hand, cut off, “ ere half her days were numbered—no reckoning made—but sent to her account with all her imperfections on her head.”

To add greater poignancy to feelings, already too acute, his friend, his generous companion, would be another sacrifice. In such a complication of calamity, this sat heavy on his mind, and could it have been spared, he fancied all other evils might be borne.

The friends of each were unwearied in their applications. Though he was universally beloved, and uniformly pitied, the relations of the deceased were too powerful, not to combat every effort that was made to save him.

The soldier, who attended with their food, was a man whose life Camelford had saved, by cutting down an Englishman whose piece was levelled at his head ; but he never entered the apartment without the attendance of the three sentinels, who suffered not a word of communication ; yet the tear of gratitude and sorrow was visible in his eye.

During the second night of their confinement, the friends distinguished a low sound behind the wainscot in the back part of the room, which they conceived to be rats ; but when the morning broke in upon them, something white was seen to move upon the partition, which, gradually increasing in size, at length fell upon the floor. Camelford, in surprise, picked up a small piece of paper, on which was written,

“ Can you be faithful, Camelford ? I love, pity, and can relieve you. Is your heart disengaged ? If so, I will trust to your honour for the rest. If your answer is favourable to my wish, cross your arms upon your breast ; if the contrary—which Heaven avert—place your left hand upon your head ; for I see you, and, alas ! have seen you too often.”

Canelford, on the impulse of the moment, looked towards the wainscot, and crossed his arms upon his breast, whilst a smile of sweet accord irradiated his countenance.

This done, he communicated the contents of the note to Thompson, and they congratulated each other upon the possibility of escaping the fate that, before, seemed inevitable. In less than an hour, a second piece of paper was squeezed through the crevice; and ran thus:—

“By your actions I am led to conclude your heart is free—I believe, and will confide. Mark—the soldier, who attends upon you, may be trusted.—You saved his life—he will cancel the obligation by saving yours. The next time he brings you food, cut not the loaf in presence of the guard; for concealed within is a file, by means of which you may easily disengage yourselves from the bonds with which you are disgracefully fettered: but be cautious—the least noise breeds suspicion, and the sentinels are watchful. Disencumbered of your irons, wait till the great clock strikes three; your friend the soldier will then remove a small division of the pannel, in loosening which, he spent the greatest part of last night. Your escape is then secure; he will conduct you into

the garden, where I shall wait your coming. But mind—your deliverer must accompany us, or his life is forfeited. Farewell—Remember three !”

The contents of this letter gave joy unspeakable to the two friends, and a variety of conjectures were formed concerning the writer—Who could she be? Their prison formed part of a deserted fabrick adjoining to a gentleman's house; but who that gentleman was, or of whom his family consisted, they were entirely ignorant. No matter—gratitude would cement the attachment, even though personal charms were wanting—not that Camelford was such a stoick, as to be indifferent on that point; but hitherto his heart had been insensible to the attacks of beauty, and, perhaps, the generous attachment of this heroick female would effect, what mere loveliness had in vain attempted.

At the usual hour, the soldier, closely followed by the sentinels, brought them their allowance, and, as was customary, waited till the bread was cut, to take away the knife. Camelford complained, that want of air and exercise destroyed all relish for food; but requested to know if he should cut

a little for Thompson? who, pretending to be ill, had thrown himself upon the bench, and refused to eat. "Well, well," said the soldier, "when you are hungry, my fine fellows, you must contrive to divide your loaf as well as you can, by breaking it; for I shall not leave a knife in the hands of desperate men. So farewell, and better stomachs to you, at our next meeting."

The guard had scarcely fastened the door, ere the file was drawn forth; but how to use it, without noise? The monotonous grating of this instrument would assuredly be heard, and the most distant suspicion lead to inquiry. At length it was agreed, that one should work, whilst the other read aloud in the Bible, the only book which had been granted to their earnest petition.

A short time sufficed to complete their emancipation, though the fetters were still confined by strings, for fear of a surprise, and, as it happened, the caution was necessary; for, about eight o'clock, a stranger appeared, to inform them, the court would sit in the morning, when sentence would be passed,

and earnestly admonished them to prepare for so awful an event.

More than ever anxious for the appointed period, the intermediate hours passed heavily. Doubts of success, as the time became more critical, gave a damp to expectation, and when the heavy bell tolled half past two, their feelings were wrought up, almost to a state of frenzy; not that either of them feared death, had it found them at the post of honour—but the parade of a public execution was more than philosophy could reconcile to minds, young and sanguine as theirs.

An awful, a death-like stillness reigned with more than usual solemnity around them. Not a glimmering of light was visible; they were seated opposite the wainscot, with eyes intently fixed upon it, even till they ached with gazing. The clock at length struck the wished-for hour—three solemn strokes upon the bell gave the appointed signal, and the wainscot was heard to move, though still nothing was visible.

To lay aside their fetters, was the first consideration, which Camelford effected in

perfect silence; but Thompson, trembling with trepidation, loosed his hold, and they fell to the ground with a loud noise. The sentinel was roused, and asked, in a voice of anger, "What is the matter?" Thompson, with much presence of mind, apologized for disturbing him, and added, in a melancholy tone, that "as he was rising from his devotions, his foot slipped, and he fell down." "Well, well," replied the guard, in the most unfeeling manner, "you won't disturb us often in the same way; for your time here is short, my masters."

In a few minutes, every thing was again quiet, except the snoring of the sentinel, which was heard with pleasure, as a token that suspicion slept. Our friends, disencumbered of their shoes, crept softly towards the pannel, when Camelford felt something pointed towards his breast, and, naturally putting his hand to the place, found it was the sheath of a sword, which, as he seized it, gently pulled him forward. Having hold of Thompson by the other hand, they soon found the aperture, and without much difficulty crept through. Not a word escaped

their lips; they were fearful even of breathing in this dangerous atmosphere, and followed their guide through several apartments, till, on a sudden, he made a halt—"Be on your guard," said he, "not against human force; for none here will assail you. This staircase has not been used for years; 'tis broken in many places, and dangerous to descend. Follow with caution, and wherever the footing is unsafe, I will give you notice."

Thus forewarned, without accident they reached the bottom, and, going through a low passage which terminated in a court, once more breathed the air of liberty. The friendly soldier—for such, indeed, he was—then led them to a garden gate. "At the bottom of that walk," said he, "you will find a present worthy of a prince—Captain, farewell! I have done my duty, and whatever becomes of me, I can die with a clear conscience." He was then retiring, when Camelford, seizing his hand, said, "Soldier, join our fortunes; we will fly this place, and in some foreign land exert our talents for the general good"—"Good or bad," replied he, "I am yours, nor will you find Lillo un-

worthy of your favour. I am no mercenary—no hireling. I left my father's fruitful fields, to fight the battles of my country as a volunteer; many a glorious victory I have shared under your command, and though not your equal in ability—in courage and integrity, you will not, I trust, find me wanting."

Camelford now questioned Lillo, respecting the female who had interested herself in their deliverance.

"She is," said he, "the only daughter of the owner of this house—a man of large fortune and great respectability. She was in court when you so nobly came forward to save your friend, and determined to work your release; as a prelude to which, she desired me to meet her in the garden, and asked if I knew Capt. Camelford? I then told her what you had done for me, and what I was willing to do for you in return; which, thank God! we have between us effected. She now waits for us in the garden, and is ready to go through the world with you."

"Is she young, Lillo?"

“Apparently about twenty—with the form of an angel, and the mind of a heroine; her name is Fanny—Miss Fanny Johnson.”

“Johnson!” exclaimed Camelford’s friend, “I know her well—the sweetest girl this country e’er produced; her father is related to Governor J——, a man who bears the cause we have been fighting for no good will. But, come, the lady will be full of apprehensions, if we do not make our appearance; besides, the morning dawns, and renders a longer parley dangerous.”

Camelford, leaving his companions, approached the lovely maid, whose majestick form and travelling dress forcibly reminded him of the sylvan goddess. He approached, kneeled, took her hand, and pressed it to his lips; then, with a serious, bold sincerity, that carried conviction to the heart, exclaimed, “For the unparalleled misfortunes I have experienced, the hand of Heaven has sent me the only reward that could be adequate to my sufferings. I cannot flatter—I scorn a falsehood. You asked me before, if “my heart was disengaged?” I answered, ‘Yes.’

Put the same question to me now, and I will with honesty say, 'No!' My heart and hand are from this moment yours. Lead me—dispose of me as you please—from henceforward I live but to obey you."

"Oh, Camelford! I fear you will hereafter condemn me, for thus transgressing the bounds prescribed my sex, my usage, and the tyrant Custom; if, on the contrary, you can allow for circumstances and situation, the fond girl, who has in part contrived your freedom, will accompany you to any clime where that freedom may be secured."

After suitable acknowledgments and protestations, Thompson and Lillo were summoned, and Fanny directed their course towards a hill on the left, beyond which was a cottage, tenanted by an old couple, and their son, who to her bounty were indebted for comforts their own circumscribed situation would have denied.

Long before their usual time of rising, our pedestrians loudly demanded admittance, which being granted, Fanny made known as much of their situation as convinced these

primitive cottagers that secrecy was required, and dispatch necessary. Accordingly, Robert their son was sent to the next town, to purchase sailors' habits, three brace of pistols, and the same number of cutlasses. In the mean time, Fanny took possession of the old couple's bed, and the others throwing themselves on the couch of Robert, sought to recruit wearied nature by a few hours' rest, previous to the fatiguing and dangerous march they had in view.

Robert executed their commands with punctuality and diligence; and as they meant to set forward in the course of the evening, no time was lost in their equipment. On assembling together in the kitchen, Camelford inquired for the little scratch wig he had ordered, to cover Fanny's luxuriant tresses; which Robert now pulled from his pocket. But judge of their consternation and terror, when they found the wig folded in a printed paper, exactly descriptive of their persons, with a reward of one hundred pounds for their apprehension.

Something of the kind was expected; but that it could have got into circulation so

soon, whilst they themselves were scarcely out of ear-shot, exceeded all belief. The sun was sinking beneath the horizon, and every thing prepared for their departure, when Fanny gave into the hands of Camelford a small casket, containing some valuable jewels; then rewarding their entertainers, they set out, scarcely able to discern their track. Lillo was constituted pilot; he was fully acquainted with the geography of the country for at least fifty miles, in every direction, and raised their hopes, by insuring their safety.

Camelford's wish was, if possible, to get to Charles-town, and there take shipping for any of the French ports; but tediousness marked the way. Their progress was impeded by fears of detection; for they rarely ventured into the high road, but crept along the woods, listening for their pursuers, and not daring to beguile the time with conversation, lest it should lead to discovery.

Fanny, by the help of Camelford, proceeded for about six hours with spirit and alacrity; but then exhausted nature required rest. Lillo was interrogated, but strongly

recommended their proceeding, even though they should be obliged to carry Fanny, as, in another hour, a place commodious and safe would be within their reach. Camelford, affectionately pressing her hand, poured forth his regret, and almost wished she had never united herself with a fate so wretched as his; but this truly heroick girl smiled at his fears, and in cheerful accents declared herself able to proceed.

The grey morn was peeping from the East, when they entered a large wood, which Lillo assured them, afforded every requisite for safety and comfort. After creeping through the underwood for about half a mile, they came to a beautiful glade, through which ran a delightful spring, nearly shaded by the forest trees. The turf was soft and refreshing, and after partaking of the viands Lillo's knapsack contained, they made as comfortable a bed as the place would allow, and Fanny soon sunk, overpowered by exertion, into a sound repose. Not so her companions; they held a whispering consultation on the measures to be pursued at Charles-town, if they were fortunate enough to get there undiscovered, which the success of their journey,

thus far, made rather probable—when it was agreed that Lillo must singly venture into the town, and so disguised, that the description should not bear the least resemblance. The printed paper was again examined, and contained a minute detail of their several persons, particularly Lillo's, whose florid complexion, short, curled sandy hair, and open countenance, were noted down with great exactness. "How shall we contrive to disguise these?" said Camelford—"Never fear, noble captain," replied Lillo, "I engage to deceive even you, who know me so well; but, I think, a few hours' rest will harm none of us—you two shall sleep, whilst I keep watch, and then, perhaps, your honours will do as much for me."

His advice was taken; they stretched themselves upon the turf, and soon forgot their cares. Lillo, in the mean time, was not idle; he went to a little distance, gathered a few pieces of dry corkwood, struck a light and burnt it to tinder—which done, he completely blacked his face and hair, and was, to appearance, a comely negro. 'Tis true, he had no looking-glass at his toilette; but he had Nature's first mirror—the lucid

stream, which represented the metamorphose as a finished performance.

The two friends did not awake till Phœbus had driven his car to the very summit of the hill; Camelford then started up, and, looking anxiously round, seemed to be recalling his situation to mind; he roused Thompson, and called Lillo, but no Lillo appeared; on a repetition of his name, Fanny awoke, and a black man sprang forward, who, in broken accents, said, "You call Lillo, massa?"

"Yes, friend—have you seen a white man, with a ruddy complexion?"

"Me see nobody, but myself—me go wid you—me be Lillo."

In some alarm for the fate of their companion, they jumped up, and were leaving the glade, in different directions, when Lillo set up a shout and a hearty laugh—"Did not I say, noble captain, I would deceive even you, who know me so well? I think I may now venture into Charles-town, without fear of detection, and, to insure our safety on

the road, will continue this complexion till we get to sea ; in the mean time, with your honour's leave, I will take my turn on the turf, and you can amuse yourselves with the contents of the knapsack, and some apples which I have gathered."

The surprise this speech occasioned, was only equalled by their joy. Detection was now less probable ; and whilst Lillo was taking that repose, fatigue and a mind at ease made sweet, they followed his instructions, and had a pleasant regale, much enlivened by the cheerfulness of Fanny, who, in sleeping off her fatigue, seemed to have lost every care, save that of pleasing Camelford, whose grief for the melancholy fate of his mother cast a gloom over features naturally animated, and once glowing with hope and expectation.

Thompson, who had been a surgeon in Camelford's regiment, was a man of cheerful habits, and some intelligence. His parents were English, but had settled in America previous to his birth, and were now no more ; he was their only surviving offspring, and in

quitting his country, forsook no ties of consanguinity, nor left a friend behind, whose interest was half so dear to him as the chosen companion, whose fortunes he was determined to share, and for whose welfare he would have sacrificed his life.

An interesting conversation was interrupted by the sound of a trumpet, on an eminence to the right; they wakened Lillo, who, ascending one of the highest trees, descried a party of horse, directing their course at full speed towards the wood. These might be their pursuers, or they were, perhaps, a reconnoitring party; at all events, it were best to avoid them; for, whether English or Americans, their discovery would be equally fatal. Having penetrated the thickest part of the forest, they carefully concealed Fanny with leaves and boughs; after which they disposed of themselves in the best manner their situation would permit. The horses' hoofs were plainly heard, but, to their great joy, there was no pause; they passed the wood at full speed, and, when the sound died away, our travellers dismissed their fears, and once more assembled in the glade.

At twilight they again set forward, with renovated spirit, and had journeyed several miles, when a large fire, upon a distant hill, attracted their attention: and just then, a tinker and his dog overtaking them, to their inquiry, he said, the light proceeded from a beacon, erected near the coast, a short distance from Charles-town. This was, indeed, pleasing intelligence; another day would conclude their fatigues—if not their cares, and they should have one enemy less to encounter.

The tinker, with great seeming kindness and hospitality, told them, they were welcome to pass the remainder of the night in his cottage, which was not more than a mile a-head; and though he could not accommodate them with beds, they should have refreshment and a good fire. This was an offer not to be rejected. Lillo, since the setting of the sun, had foretold a tempest, which now seemed approaching; the wind blew in squalls—heavy clouds obscured the moon—the thunder rolled at a distance, and large drops of rain began to descend. They quickened their pace; but ere they reached the cottage, the storm raged furiously.

On entering the tinker's miserable hut, they were received by a coarse, masculine woman, and two young men, her sons, of very unpromising appearance: villainy was legibly printed on their tell-tale features, which, though unmarked by Fanny, whom fatigue had completely overpowered, was observed with suspicion by her friends, though without dread; for in numbers they were equal, and well armed for defence.

Camelford requested, their young companion might, if possible, lie down, being quite overcome with indisposition and fatigue. The woman readily gave up her bed, and lighted Fanny to an adjoining room, nearly level with the kitchen—who, by way of remuneration, took from her purse a dollar, and incautiously exposed the contents, which the woman gazed upon with an eager eye, and malign aspect. Fanny threw herself upon the dirty-looking bed; but when her hostess would have departed with the candle, she insisted upon its burning the remainder of the night, as, perhaps, indisposition might keep her waking.

The three friends took possession of an old wooden bench and some chairs, where Camelford and Thompson soon slept; but Lillo, suspicious of the whole family, from certain looks which passed between the woman and her sons, when she retreated from Fanny's chamber, determined his slumbers should be feigned. As he lay, ruminating on the probability of this night's adventure, a murmuring of voices, seemingly in consultation, issued from the cock-loft, where the tinker, his wife, and sons, had retired, when the travellers lay down to repose.

Presently the three men stole softly down the ladder, with each a rope, and tied Camelford and Thompson to the grate—at the same time taking away the pistols and cutlass; Lillo, who lay upon his, they fastened to the bench, and retired. The moment their backs were turned, Lillo, with a clasp-knife, liberated himself and his friends, and then lay down, as before.

Fanny had reposed about an hour, without being able to sleep, when her eyes were attracted to the window by a slight noise,

and she plainly perceived the face of a man, whose black-looking, ferocious countenance struck terror to her heart. She had a brace of pistols in her bosom, and had practised firing on the road; but it must be a case of extreme emergency that would tempt her to level one at a fellow-creature. The face had disappeared; but her attention was drawn to the inside of the house, where she heard whispering; a footstep approached the chamber, and the door gently opened. Almost frantick with terror, she arose—cocked one of her pistols, and called out, “Who’s there?” No answer being returned, she took up her candle, to examine if there was a bolt, or any other means of fastening the door; but none appearing, she tied the latch fast with her garter—determined, whoever it was, they should not take her by surprise.

Once more extended on her comfortless bed, she kept her eye steadily fixed upon the door, and beheld a large knife inserted, which, by its motion, she conjectured to be in the act of cutting the garter. Again she jumped up, and setting her back against the wall, to give steadiness to her limbs, waited

the approach of the intruders—each trembling hand holding a pistol.

The door opened without noise, and the three rogues entered; but, ere they had advanced two paces, her courage revived by the sight of Lillo, who was close behind them—his cutlass suspended over their heads. Emboldened by this sight, and possessing fortitude superior to her sex, she levelled her pistol at the tinker's eldest son, and lodged the contents in his breast; at the same moment, Lillo, with one blow, nearly severed the tinker's arm from his body, and, ere he could recover from his amazement, pointed a pistol at the head of the other son, who immediately fell on his knees, and implored their mercy.

Camelford and Thompson, roused by the noise, were on the spot in an instant, followed by the old wretch, who was the original cause of all this mischief, wringing her hands, and imploring them not to destroy her whole family.

By this time day began to peep; and, after properly securing the tinker, his wife, and son, that no alarm might be given till they were safe from pursuit, they set forward, keeping as far as possible from the public road, and arrived, without further accident, in the neighbourhood of Charles-town, where they were accommodated in a fisherman's hut, and Lillo sent to the quay, to make inquiry for a vessel bound to France. He returned, before night, with the joyful intelligence, that a transport, which had brought over troops, would sail with the first fair wind, and gladly receive them on board.

Lillo was fully employed, the whole of the next day, in making preparations for their departure—in which was included the purchase of ready-made linen; and in the evening they went on board the *Atalanta*, Capt. Dubois, bound for Brest—Lillo having previously changed his complexion.

Perfect composure, nearly approaching to joy, was the sensation felt by this little party. Pursuit and detection, which kept their minds in constant agitation, were fol-

lowed by security, confidence, and mutual regard. Equality was henceforward to be the ruling deity; one purse—one interest—one destiny, were to unite them. Prosperous gales and fine weather accompanied the voyage; the passage was quick, and the French coast in view, when an English privateer, of great force, bore down upon them. Resistance was vain; they submitted with resignation to their fate, and went on board the English privateer, whose captain took possession of their money and jewels, according to the law of nations, but otherwise paid them every possible attention.

The privateer and her prize now stood towards Albion, and were nearly entering the Bristol Channel, when a storm, awfully tremendous, overtook them. Their only chance of safety depended on sea-room, which, after beating about for several hours, was happily effected. The wind increased till it blew a perfect hurricane—the rain came down in torrents—the thunder, in dreadful peals, rattled over their heads, whilst each heavy sea threatened instant destruction.

'Twas now Camelford found himself a coward—not on his own account, but for his Fanny and his faithful companions, for whose dear sakes alone he suffered, and would joyfully have sacrificed existence.

Fanny, who desired not life, unconnected with Camelford, and whose only hope rested on contributing to his happiness, was calm amidst the strife of elements—one fate would attend them; and if they were not destined to live together, there was a comfort, even in death, preferable—much preferable to a separate existence.

The captain, who was a veteran in the service, had a perfect knowledge of the coast, and knew their safety could only be accomplished by keeping out to sea; but in the middle of the night the wind chopped about, and drove them up St. George's Channel. He endeavoured to make Holyhead, but found it impracticable. The sea raged with unabated violence; the vessel had sprung a leak, and nothing but the deepest knowledge and intrepidity kept her from going to pieces on the rocks which rise sublimely majestick on

the coast of Peel Town, in the Isle of Man; but having cleared these, she drifted along the coast of Ireland, and on the second day, at noon, all hopes of safety were lost—both seamen and passengers were exhausted—the vessel no longer obeyed the helm, but drove before the wind, and the rocks of Cantyre, in Scotland, were right a-head. Destruction seemed inevitable, and all that remained was to provide for their safety, as well as circumstances would permit. The captain and crew took to the boat; but no entreaty could prevail upon them to admit our four friends, which ultimately was the means of saving their lives; for, ere the boat had advanced a cable's length, she filled—upset, and every soul perished! Camelford lashed Fanny to the only mast they had standing, and the next moment the vessel bulged, with a loud crash, upon the rocks, and there remained, the sea dashing over her every instant.

In this dreadful situation they continued till day-break the next morning, when the wind abated; the tide had considerably retreated, and left them nearly dry. Poor Fanny, who was in a state bordering on eternity, was carefully conveyed on shore, sup-

ported by Camelford and Lillo; they had scarcely begun their walk, ere some peasants, habited in the costume of the country, approached, and very humanely offered their services, which were as thankfully accepted.

Having conducted them to the nearest cottage, Fanny was put to bed, and carefully attended; the rest were provided with dry clothing, and slept soundly and sweetly upon some clean straw in the barn. Towards evening the three friends arose, refreshed, and thankful for the mercy and kindness they had received. Fanny was feverish, and otherwise much indisposed; but Thompson having bled her, and recommended quietness, they walked down to the wreck, to see if any thing remained that would be useful, and found a small trunk in the cabin, which fortunately contained some changes of linen; and likewise a cask of rum, which Lillo carried, as a present, to their hospitable entertainers.

In a week Fanny was perfectly recovered, and united to her beloved Camelford, according to the laws of the Scotch kirk—having previously resumed her female habit,

Camelford's next care was to send a letter to his correspondent in America—to whose trust the management of his estate was left—fully descriptive of his situation, and enforcing the necessity of a speedy remittance, directed to the Post-office in Carlisle.

Before they took leave of these hospitable people, the minister of the parish, with unwearied assiduity, raised a subscription of twenty pounds, with which, and his blessing, he presented them, at their departure—at the same time making out a route to Glasgow, and inserting the names of several people, to whom they might use his name as a sufficient passport, for kindness and hospitality on the road.

Thus provided, our friends sat forward, and, as the worthy father predicted, were treated with brotherly love, wherever they stopped for refreshment or rest.

At the town of Dumbarton, Camelford's eyes were first greeted by the sight of a London newspaper; but his surprise and sorrow can scarcely be imagined, when he saw a reward of one thousand pounds offered, on con-

viction of himself and Thompson, with their persons accurately described. This was a blow, indeed ! as unwelcome as unexpected ; all prospect of fixing himself and his beloved Fanny, in a comfortable retreat, was at an end ; the officers of justice would hunt him from place to place, and concealment was their only chance against persecution—imprisonment—perhaps death ; for, he doubted not, the advertisement was circulated all over Europe, since their being, at this time, in the British dominions, was contrary to all rules of probability.

They quitted Dumbarton precipitately, and travelled with speed, looking back, at every turn in the road, for their pursuers ; and now first calling to mind, that, besides the advertisement, there was, perhaps, another cause of dread, namely, their being recognized for Americans—American soldiers, who had fought, in defence of their country, against the inhabitants of the land, where now they sought refuge.

In the midst of these uncomfortable reflections, they were ascending a hill, from the summit of which they descried, in the

plain beneath, a large fire, round which a merry groupe were dancing to the bagpipes; the moon threw a feeble light on the place, and rendered the scene highly picturesque. Camelford left his companions, to descend the hill slowly, and suddenly appeared amongst them. His majestick stature and undaunted mien threw an air of restraint upon the party; the eldest of whom inquired his errand—"If," said he, "you want refreshment, sit down and partake—you are heartily welcome; our fare is coarse, but wholesome."

Camelford informed him, he had three companions, who with himself, would thankfully accept his offer; he then gave a shrill whistle, which brought Thompson, Lillo, and Fanny. Oaten cakes, eggs, butter, and milk, were spread before them, whilst the younger part of the assembly resumed their dance. The party consisted of five men and three women, of tawny complexions; their habiliments were poor and ragged, but perfectly clean. After their repast, the senior of the party, who did not appear to be more than five and forty, brought a stone bottle, and, presenting a horn of strong ale, said,

“ Eat, drink, and be merry—the Gipseys of the North are never sad.” The horn was passed round, and Camelford thus addressed them :—“ My worthy friends, your mode of living pleases me—where do you dwell?”

“ No where,” replied the senior ; “ we are free rangers, and abide where convenience or fancy lead ; we are under no controul, for we own no master ; we render service wherever we find opportunity, and do as little harm as possible ; we eat when hunger presses ; drink to allay our thirst, and sleep—sometimes under the canopy of heaven, sometimes in barns, and frequently in subterraneous caverns, unknown to any but ourselves.”

“ But how are you maintained?”

“ By our own industry ; we neither rob nor plunder. A very little satisfies man’s real wants ; and those artificial ones, invented by luxury, and upheld by pride, we know not of. Regularity and exercise produce health and cheerfulness, and our homely fare is enjoyed with a degree of freedom and independence, the regular world are unacquainted with.”

Camelford drew his friends aside—" Shall we join these people? We have at present no visible means of livelihood, nor dare we shew ourselves in the world, to procure one; the time will come, I trust—but, for the present, suppose we try the gipsey life—what say you !"

Camelford's least wish was a law to these his attached friends, who cheerfully assented to the proposal, provided it was agreeable to the itinerants, whom he undertook to sound.

" Pray, my worthy host," said Camelford, " what induced you to adopt this strange, because uncommon mode of life? Your education, I am convinced, has been above the common stamp—of course, you have seen better days."

" 'Tis true, we have seen better days—have sat at great men's tables, and have, with holy bell, been knoll'd to church; but Nature having endued us with feelings, and Fortune been niggard of her means, we have withdrawn ourselves from a depraved world, where the glorious energies of the heart are stifled by self-interest, and suffering huma-

nity is looked upon with apathy and contempt."

"Stranger," said a young man, "our parent has spoken the truth. Once a respectable merchant in Whitehaven, he was unwarily surprised into a law-suit with a noble scoundrel in that neighbourhood, and though justice was evidently on our side, and though we are told the equality of our blessed laws distributes unprejudiced and impartial decrees, to the poor as to the rich, yet this colossus of wealth, this vast monopolizer of landed property, diverted the course of justice, by removing the cause from court to court, till we were ruined. Our estate was sold, for the creditors, and, with a few hundreds, we left the civilized world to its iniquity, and live as you see."

"I am a son of the church," exclaimed a portly man, apparently about forty; "my father was a tallow-chandler, but, determined to have one gentleman in his family, placed me at St. Bee's, in Cumberland, where I qualified myself for preaching the gospel, and at the age of twenty-two, obtained a curacy, and performed the whole duty for twenty-four

pounds a year, whilst the rector received four hundred for doing nothing; but that, you will say, was no business of mine—so let it pass. Being a little too conscientious, perhaps, I refused to read the Athanasian Creed, I refused to deal out d—n—n to those who could not comprehend what was allowed to be incomprehensible, and lost my situation. Disgusted with these dignified drones, who preach sometimes, but seldom practise, I procured a sum from my father, under the idea of going to London; instead of which I joined my friends, and lead a life of innocence—I may say usefulness.”

“ I am,” said a comely looking man, “ a younger brother. My father had a great attachment to every thing that bore the face of antiquity; old systems of all kinds he venerated, particularly the law of primogeniture; and though his estate, of four thousand pounds a year, was unentailed, he left the whole to my elder brother, and five hundred pounds a-piece to myself, and sister, who sits smiling by my side. Our brother, who inherited all his father’s pride, looked upon us as aliens to his blood, and gave us to understand, the sooner we could provide for our-

selves, the better. Accordingly, my poor Mary was put apprentice to a milliner, and I began to study the law; but not much liking the quirks and quibbles of the profession, I engaged myself as steward, or bailiff, to an old nobleman, from whom I received a handsome salary—took a house, and placed Mary at the head of it. His lordship was very infirm; repeated attacks of the gout had made great inroads on his constitution; but he had a young and lovely wife, and some beautiful children, to superintend whose education, the curate of a neighbouring parish lived constantly at the manor-house. He was young, comely, and insinuating; his manners were soft and pliant; every girl in the parish was anxious to attract his notice, till, by accident, the handsome curate was discovered to be a married man, though in a state of separation from his wife.

“ I had always a suspicion that this was a wolf in sheep’s clothing—he was too civil by half. The attention he shewed his patron was rather that of a son than a servant, and his lordship, in return, treated him as though he had been really so. With regard to my lady, he was her constant companion; in all

her riding or pedestrian excursions, who so agreeable as the tutor? Were a new novel or play brought home, who could read it, with half such effect as the Rev. Mr. Black? His lordship always retired early, and his reverence was then particularly useful—ready for a game at cards—a little musick—or he could so agreeably while away the hours, by interesting conversation on subjects the most *tender*.

“ One day it was my unfortunate lot to make a discovery in the garden, which confirmed, what before was merely suspicion, that their attachment was warmer than was quite consistent with my lord’s happiness. To be an unconcerned spectator was neither agreeable to my character nor situation, and a hasty determination to unmask the hypocrite was immediately put in execution, by the following lines, addressed to his lordship:

“ Your lordship is imposed upon. The writer of this does not condemn on mere suspicion—he has ocular demonstration. Black is a man that ‘ can smile, and smile, and be a villain’—the worst of villains—the destroyer of his benefactor’s honour. Nothing actually criminal may have passed, but, if not nipped in the bud, soon will.

“ A sincere regard for your lordship’s happiness alone stimulates me to write what must give you pain to read ; for ‘ when ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound feels double pain.’ Let the remedy be applied in time, and perhaps, all dangerous symptoms may cease.”

“ In a quarter of an hour I was summoned to his lordship’s room, whom I found in a fit, with the letter in his clenched hand. My lady and the parson soon entered ; and, as his lordship’s hands relaxed, she snatched the letter, and read it—confusion strongly painted in her countenance ; Black likewise looked it over. When my lord recovered, he turned from them with disgust, and said, “ Mason, who wrote that letter ? ”

“ I did, my lord.”

“ And what did you witness in the summer-house ? ”

“ I repeated, with minuteness, every thing I had seen and heard, and was then requested to retire. To make short of my story, this sanctified, consummate hypocrite had art enough to persuade my lord of his innocence, and convinced him the whole

was a fabrication of mine, from revenge for his having frequently checked me for swearing. The result was natural; my dismissal was the price at which the reconciliation was purchased; but, determined on exposure, I wrote a pamphlet, under the title of 'The Black Sheep,' in which I faithfully related the whole transaction. The enraged parties commenced an action for a libel, and I was cast in four hundred pounds damages.

"Determined not to be wholly ruined, I collected our little property, and set off, with my sister under my arm, leaving the lawyers to pay themselves by the sale of my household furniture.

"I beg your pardon for taking up so much time, in rather relating other people's adventures than my own; but without this, you would, perhaps, have still been ignorant, that in this country, 'the greater the truth, the greater the libel.' I have not told you, gentle strangers, how I met with my present associates, nor is it necessary; that we did meet, has been to me a source of happiness, which, I hope, will long continue."

Camelford, much pleased with the conversation, and highly approving the sentiments of this little party, in return, made known the adventures and present uncomfortable state of himself and friends, and frankly proposed a junction with the happy and independent society of "The Gipseys of the North."

"Camelford," said the senior, "you, your consort, and friends, are right welcome amongst us; and I think, judging from appearances, the event of our fortunate *rencontre* will be for the good of the society. Your independent spirit, strength, address, and knowledge of mankind, joined to a physiognomy which bespeaks candour and humanity, have formed you in my mind, for our leader. Henceforward, then, be our captain; that post has heretofore devolved on me as senior of the party; but, though I will cheerfully undertake the management of our expenses and domestick concerns, it requires talents, such as you probably possess, to guide us in our more active pursuits—such, for instance, as redressing grievances, foiling the machinations of the midnight assassin, and many other evils, which we have sworn

to remedy, to the full extent of our power—say, will you accept this post of confidence and danger?”

“Most willingly—the offer is gratifying to my self-love, and your opinion shall stimulate my future actions. I pledge myself, as you have done, to succour the distressed—to defend the poor against the encroachments of the mighties of the land—to assist the weak, and despoil the lawless ruffians, who sacrifice every principle of justice and humanity. One thing I must observe—arms are, doubtless, necessary in some of your excursions; but I have made a vow, never again to trust myself with sanguinary weapons—the unfortunate death of my poor mother recurring to my mind; therefore this powerful cudgel must, at all times, and upon every occasion, be my only defence; for never will I again rob a fellow-creature of existence, unless impelled by self-defence, and that the most urgent.”

They now all arose. Camelford was formally introduced to each individual as their leader, and, as such, was joyfully received.

The senior, who was their minstrel, threw his pipes over his shoulder, and led the way towards a thick wood. After pacing a meandering path, which led to the foot of a hill, the five men drew forth their lanterns, illuminated them, and led the way through a cavity large enough to admit the human form; they proceeded, for about ten yards, through a passage narrow and difficult to pass, when, on a sudden, it opened into a large, lofty cave (branching out into several smaller ones) furnished with stone benches and tables, and a variety of culinary utensils. The four recesses were kept exclusively for sleeping-rooms, and appropriated to the senior, his two sons and their wives, and Mary Mason; but the former relinquished his to Camelford and Fanny. The others, consisting of the parson, the lawyer, Dr. Thompson, Lillo, and the senior, occupied one end of the cavern, raised from the ground with pieces of wood, on which was spread plenty of dry heath, with sheets and blankets.

At break of day they arose, and broke their fast with bread and milk, purchased, the day before, at a farm-house; after which

our friends were each fitted with a habit from the general stock. A simple preparation was next applied, which changed the tint of the complexion to a deep brown.

They had scarcely completed their metamorphosis, when a loud whistle was heard at the entrance of the cave, accompanied by the barking of a dog. Camelford seized his cudgel—"Be not alarmed," said the senior, "'tis only the shepherd, a simple, honest creature, who resides about two miles off, on a small farm, and is of great use, in bringing us eggs, butter, and milk."

They went out, and received the honest man with a hearty shake of the hand—"I've brought," said he, "your milk; but I wish you could, in future, send for it—I'm fearful of coming so far from home."

"What have you to fear?" said Camelford, struck with the innocence of his character.

"I know not," replied the man, "but my heart is very heavy, and all on account of my bonny bairn—my Jenny, who is all I

have left in this sad world to comfort me. Last night I heard a noise at my door, and found a young man, a neighbour, who appeared so ill, he was unable to move without assistance. Well—I put him into my bed, and lying down by his side, slept till morning; when I got up, I found Sandy gone, and Jenny crying by the fire. The ungrateful loon, whilst I slept, stole to my daughter's bed, where, by spells and witchcraft, he accomplished his purpose, when she prayed him to make her an honest woman, laughed in her face and left the house. Ah, wae is me! If any thing should come of it, my bairn must do penance in a white sheet, or else be excommunicated, and either of these would go nigh to break my heart. Now, I know you gipsies can tell fortunes—for did not you tell me where to find my cow?—therefore do let me know the worst at once; will shame come to Jenny, or will Sandy make her an honest woman?"

“ Friend,” said the senior, looking with much solemnity at the lines of his hand, “ if wedding can make her an honest woman, she shall be one—this man will marry your daughter, and you will be happy.”

“ You don’t say so,” replied the shepherd—the tear of gratitude running down his sun-burnt cheek—“ bless you, bless you, for this good news! But how do you know all this?”

“ Inquire not, but be in readiness with your daughter at eight o’clock; at which hour you will bestow her on Sandy.”

The shepherd, having received pay for his milk, stumped briskly towards his home, placing as much dependance on the senior’s word, as if the ceremony had already passed.

“ Now, captain,” said the senior to Camelford, “ you will have an opportunity of shewing your ingenuity and address, and prove yourself worthy of the title we have invested you with.”

In the close of the evening Camelford, with four of the party, having arrayed themselves in black from the general wardrobe, left their retreat, and, mounting the hill, soon arrived at the shepherd’s cot, where they found him seated before a peat fire, and Jenny weeping by his side. Having inquired the way to Sandy’s abode, Camelford told

the father and daughter to follow them in half-an-hour; in the mean time they approached Sandy's house, and, looking through the window, saw him seated alone, and apparently either asleep, or in deep meditation. They entered without hesitation, to the surprise and alarm of the young man, whom Camelford's commanding height, aided by his stout cudgel, filled with terror and astonishment. He jumped up, and, in a trembling voice, asked, whom they wanted?"

"You!" said Camelford—"you have betrayed an innocent young woman, and must repair the injury. We are deputed to examine and rectify these kinds of abuses, and if the parties prove refractory, our power is unlimited; but here, I trust, the task will be an easy one—you are not an hardened sinner; we have the gift of reading men's secret thoughts, and yours, at this moment, are filled with sorrow for the wrongs you have done Jenny M'Pherson, and an anxious desire to make reparation. By my gift of second-sight, I foresee the poor girl and her father are now on their road hither, and you will this night—nay, this very hour—receive her as your wife. Come, man, look up with

confidence; though we have such power, we harm only the wicked, therefore are you safe."

Jenny and her father approached the door, and Camelford, leading her forward, said, "Is this the girl you have injured?"

"Oh, Jenny, Jenny!" blubbered the young man, "you shall, indeed, be my wife. This gentleman has told me the strangest things—he knows every thing, even what I was thinking of, though I never opened my lips to him."

"Come," said Camelford, "our time is precious; this worthy minister will do his office."

The parson pulled out a book, and repeating enough of the marriage ceremony to make it binding, they took their leave, and left three people as happy as ignorance, innocence, and credulity could make them.

The time now arrived, which they usually passed in the neighbourhood of Loch Lomond. Preparations were accordingly made, and the shepherd and his poney engaged to

accompany them. This man had been a soldier in his youth, and had not yet forgot his broad-sword exercise. Camelford took lessons on the road, and, ere they parted, was deeper in the science than his master; this proved in the end of great utility, enabling him to use his stick in times of danger, as a powerful defence.

'Twas evening when our party arrived at Ben Lomond. At the base of this stupendous mountain issues a spring from an arched cavity in the rock, so formed by nature, that an entrance can only be obtained by going through this shallow rivulet; of course the extent of the subterranean was seldom explored, nay, its very existence scarcely known, even to the inhabitants of this delightful spot; it had, however, been the occasional rendezvous of our itinerants, for more than two years.

The honest shepherd was amply rewarded, and dismissed; when Robert, the youngest of the senior's sons, and the junior of the party, pulled off his shoes and stockings, crossed the stream, and was instantly invisible; but returned in a few minutes,

bearing a broad plank, which, properly placed, formed a safe and commodious bridge; when they had all passed, it was removed, their lanterns lighted, and, preceded by the senior, they advanced a considerable way, ere they arrived at a spacious vault, formed in the solid rock, in many respects convenient, and perfectly dry.

“My friends,” said the senior, “you are welcome to the Cave of Ben Lomond, known but to few. By our own industry we made it habitable two years ago, adding, from time to time, such conveniences as contribute greatly to our comfort.

“’Tis nearly eight months since we left it; yet our furniture and utensils remain *in statu quo*, which plainly shews there have been no intruders. We must add a little fresh ling to our beds, which, you perceive, are perfectly dry, and then seek that repose, I am sure, our females stand in need of.”

In the morning the whole party took a ramble to the summit of Ben Lomond, which affords a most delightful and extensive pros-

pect. Camelford, leaving his companions, who, seated on a rock, were attentively listening to the senior's description of the adjacent country, strolled towards a clump of trees on the left, meditating on the singularity of his situation, the uncommon events of his short life, and the untimely fate of his mother—a subject that constantly harassed his mind, and gave a melancholy tinge to his careworn countenance—lost in reflection, he had advanced to the furthest extremity of the mountain, and was meditating a return, when voices assailed his ears; the speakers were not discernible, but the noise seemed to proceed from an overhanging rock, a few yards beneath.

Curiosity was never one of Camelford's foibles, and he was turning back to join his companions, when the following sentence arrested his attention:

“Gray is our man; but as he is well prepared for defence, the only way to secure ourselves is, to set fire to the house—murder them as they come out, and then secure the property.”

“Aye, aye,” said another voice, “that will be the only way. To-night he returns from Glasgow, where he is gone to receive two thousand pounds; that, with his other valuable property, will be the making of us.”

Camelford's blood recoiled with horror, at this cool determination to rob and murder a whole family. The impulse of the moment was to jump down and seize these miscreants; but a little reflection convinced him of the danger and uncertainty of this plan. He therefore lay close amongst the stunted pines, in hopes they would make him fully master of their plans; but here he was disappointed. They were already on the move; he heard their retreating steps, and, peeping over the summit, saw five stout men, who, unsuspecting of their communication, were leisurely winding down the hill. He returned, greatly agitated, to his friends, who were still seated, and listening to the sweet air of “Roy's Wife,” which Mary Mason sung with great effect.

Lillo inquired the meaning of Camelford's emotion, who related, correctly, the

two speeches he had overheard, and wished it were possible to counteract their devilish intention.

“It is in our power,” replied the lawyer. “I know this Gray well; he is a very respectable grazing farmer, and resides about six miles from hence, on the Glasgow road; let us instantly go there and take proper precautions.”

Returning to the cave, Camelford, Thompson, Lillo, the parson, and the lawyer, equipped themselves in sailors’ habits, with each a club, and (except Camelford) a brace of pistols, and commenced their walk, leaving the senior and his two sons to protect the females.

Gray’s house was large and of great antiquity; it consisted of the main building and two wings; at the end of the east wing was a large pond, or reservoir of water, through which, by pipes, that element was conducted to every story of the house. Camelford was deputed to open the business, whilst the others kept aloof, for fear their numbers and appearance should cause alarm instead of confidence.

Going to the house, he inquired for Mr. Gray. "He was not at home."

"Could he speak with Mrs. Gray?" "Yes; there was nobody with her but a neighbouring minister, upon a week's visit to the family."

Being ushered into the parlour, he beheld a middle-aged lady, in a puritanical dress, fanaticism painted in every line of her countenance. By her sat a good-looking, smooth-faced man, in black—the very prince of deceit, if there is any truth in Lavater.

"My business, madam," said Camelford, "is for your private ear."

The gentleman got up, though with seeming reluctance.

"Stay, good sir—there is nothing a true christian ought to do, that an enlightened minister ought not to hear. Whatever you have to say, young man, may be freely spoken—I have no concealments with this pious teacher."

Camelford soon perceived he had to deal with a weak, credulous enthusiast, and (if appearances were true) an artful hypocrite——“Madam, by chance I became acquainted with a secret, on which your property and the lives of all your family depend. To-morrow night a set of miscreants have laid a plan to fire your house—murder you all, and possess themselves of your money and valuables.”

“God forbid!” she exclaimed, lifting up her hands.

“Aye, God forbid!” echoed the preacher; “but I should hope your exemplary life, and the faith you have just now expressed in the promises, would preserve you from fear, and despair of the divine protection.”

“Ah, good sir! I confess my error—I am but a weak vessel, unless strengthened by your heavenly counsel. I will trust—for sure I am, security and blessing attend the house where you reside.” Then turning to Camelford——“Pray, how did you learn this secret? You are a sailor by your dress.”

Camelford said, he had been at sea, and then explained how he got possession of his knowledge. At the conclusion, the minister assumed a satirical smile, shook his head, and, in fine silver tones, observed—"Though I have as much faith in sacred things as falls to the lot of frail humanity, yet, in temporal matters, it behoves the elect to be cautious of giving implicit credit to information that comes through such a doubtful channel.—Your account of this plot, young man, carries an air of great improbability. In the first place, it is scarcely credible, that any set of men should be so far given up to the devil, as to plan a deed which would end in their final d—n—n. In the next place, granting them to be the agents of Lucifer, is it likely they should assemble where you have described, and speak loud enough to be heard, on a subject of this nature? In the third place——"

"Stop, sir," cried Camelford, who, with difficulty, had contained himself during this harangue—"this is a mode of treatment I am not used to, and cannot suffer. I am liberal enough, however, to grant, you have some cause for your suspicion, which makes

me overlook certain parts of your offensive speech. Your dress bespeaks your profession, which, though no cloak for impertinence, preserves you from chastisement. I came with an intent to serve and save this family; but since my words are doubted, and I can bring forward no corroboration of my veracity, I leave you, madam, to your fate, and the protection of this ghostly comforter."

He left the room abruptly, and was joining his friends, when the minister followed him, sent by the lady's fears, to request his return; but in vain—he indignantly turned upon his heel, and walked away.

When he had related his reception, the lawyer, biting his lip, said, "I would give a little finger to have hold of that smooth dissembler; I saw him follow you to the door, and know him to be a villain—the wretch who caused my ruin—the hypocritical Parson Black! Let us return to the house, and seize him."

"Hold!" said Camelford—"no improper violence. Let not the Gipseys of the North, who are united, and pledged to serve

their fellow-creatures, trample on their own laws. Revenge is a mean, a contemptible passion, calculated only to gratify little minds—let ours soar above it. But come—we must think of more momentous concerns, than reviling parsons and old women—this house must be saved. What course shall we pursue?”

By the parson's advice, they adjourned to a publick-house on the road-side, which Mr. Gray must necessarily pass, on his way home. At the close of day, accordingly, as he was riding leisurely along, Camelford accosted him, and, with his usual address, related the whole affair. Though much surprised and shocked, he implicitly believed him, and gratefully consulted Camelford on the means likely to defeat this diabolical scheme.

Camelford, finding him a man of sense and liberality, related the reception he had met with from Mrs. Gray and the parson; at which he smiled, and, shaking his head, replied, “We have all our weak sides, and fanaticism is her's; but, she is a good woman in the main. Parson Black is a great favourite with the enlightened, particularly

the females. Lord —, my landlord, allows him to reside in his house; in which, to be sure, he has been the cause of a good deal of misunderstanding, and, indeed, the ruin of the steward. Poor man! he was a good, worthy creature, but has not been heard of, in these parts, for some years."

Camelford now made known his plan for the protection of Mr. Gray and his house—"In the first place, you have two thousand pounds about you; this, together with your other portable property, I should recommend you to deposit in some place of safety; for though I make no doubt we shall secure these marauders, yet, as they have probably placed combustibles about the building, the fire may break out where it is least looked for, and, consequently, enhance the danger. Your first business must be, to make strict search in your dwelling and offices. Arm every man about the premises, and at nine o'clock I will bring four powerful auxiliaries, men of tried courage, who are used to hardship, and fearless of danger. Order your servants to admit us, without inquiry, and I will dispose of them in the best possible manner."

Gray, with a thousand thanks, promised to obey his instructions—"But how, my friend, shall I ever repay you?"

"Not a word of that nature, Mr. Gray—we have as yet done nothing. But time wears—we must be on the alert. I think it would be as well not to inform the female part of your family, in which I include the parson; their fears would only create confusion, and retard our exertions."

Gray, the moment he got home, summoned his two labourers, and made a fruitless search; no combustibles were discovered, nor any appearance that could at all lead to suspicion. In the mean time, the five friends formed their plans; but previous to any definitive conclusion, it was necessary to be upon the premises; where they arrived, and knocking at the door, Gray admitted them himself—"Walk in, my worthy protectors," said he, "I have placed a slight repast in the next room"—"Stop," replied Camelford; "no refreshment passes our lips till the business we are come upon is completed—therefore, every man to his post—Thompson and Lillo, guard the door, which, as a trap, leave

unlocked, and a little open." The other two he placed in a similar situation at the back door, which led to the garden. He himself was stationed in a large front parlour, with the shutters open, so that, by the light of the moon, he could see any one who passed the front of the house, and, by throwing up the window, jump out in a moment, should occasion require it. Gray and his men paraded round the house with their fowling-pieces, and each a broad sword, buttoned inside their coats.

Eleven o'clock struck—twelve—one—but nothing appeared. They now gave up the watch, and concluded, their fears, for that night at least, were over. Camelford, not having heard any precise time mentioned for the attack, imagined the same, and reluctantly consented to take refreshment.

The strong ale had gone once round, when the screams of women, from the east wing, called their attention—"To your posts," said Camelford—"Mr. Gray, take your men to the protection of the females; for, I am convinced, this part of the house will be the main object of their attack." He was now

alone. Opposite to where he sat, anxiously expecting, every moment, to be called into action, was a large pier-glass, that nearly covered one end of the room. Casually looking towards it, he saw a man enter from a door behind him, and brandish a cutlass over his head. Quick as lightning, he started up, his chair received the blow; and, ere the villain could recover himself, Camelford lent him a stroke with his cudgel, that laid him prostrate. At that moment the chimney-board fell, from behind which two ferocious monsters rushed forth, armed with broad swords, with which they struck desperately, though evidently without skill, for Camelford parried them both. With his back against the wainscot, he acted on the defensive, till perceiving an opening, he thrust his stick into the face of one, and seconded it with a blow at the other, which, had it taken effect, must have dealt destruction; but his opponent received it on his sword, with such force, that the cudgel broke in two; and left him at the mercy of the merciless, who now conceived his conquest sure; for though his companion was rendered incapable, from the anguish of his eye, which was out of the

socket, there could be little to fear from an opponent, whose only defence was a broken stick. He, therefore, made a deadly blow, which Camelford warded off with the chair; but such a defence must ultimately fail him. Fortunately, at this time, he stumbled over the sword of the dead man—flung the chair, with all his might, at his only remaining foe, and, stooping, in a moment stood on his defence, sword in hand.

The other wretch had, by this time, replaced his eye, and, though in agony, advanced to support his comrade, when Gray entered the room, and, levelling his piece, shot him through the head—at the same time that Camelford, with the first blow, broke his antagonist's right arm above the elbow; they then tied him, neck and heels, and, without stopping even for gratulation, flew in search of their other friends. Proceeding along the passage, Camelford stumbled over something, which, on lowering the candle, gave to his distracted view the body of Lillo!

Another scream, from the women, called for immediate assistance. On reaching the

east wing, they found it on fire—whilst, from a bed-chamber at the extremity, two men were dragging forth a third, in his shirt, with one of the servant's flannel petticoats under his arm. This was no other than the Rev. Mr. Black, whom they mistook for Gray, and were threatening with instant death, unless he delivered up his money. Close behind followed the lawyer, who, with his cudgel, appeared ready to dispatch one of them; but, seeing the parson was their victim, hesitated, from the hatred he bore him.

“Strike!” exclaimed Camelford, rushing forward—which so alarmed the thieves, that, letting go their prey, they made an attempt to escape, but were opposed by the lawyer, who used his club with as much dexterity as he had formerly done his pen; and, assisted by Camelford and Gray, they were soon secured; whilst the minister, who supposed them to be all one party, no sooner found himself at liberty, than he made the best of his way down stairs, and out of the back-door.

Without stopping to breathe, Camelford called their attention to the fire, as yet con-

fined to one room, unconnected with the house, except by a gallery, and out of which issued volumes of smoke. As they were about to enter, Mrs. Gray—wildness and distraction in her looks—screamed out, “My child! my child! Oh! will nobody save him?” Camelford, immediately apprehending the business, rushed through the fire, and, at the furthest extremity of the apartment, beheld a cradle; but, ere he could secure the sleeping infant, part of the floor he had passed, fell in, and rendered his return impracticable. The window, though only the second story in front, was a tremendous height backwards, and overlooked the water before-mentioned; by the side of which, the whole family were now assembled—anxiety and distress in every countenance.

Camelford, whose presence of mind never deserted him, dashed out the window-frame, and standing in the space, with the child in his arms, called out,

“Is the water deep?”

“Yes.”

“ So much the better ”—and throwing himself out, amidst the screams of the spectators, was for a few moments immersed in water ; but when he arose, the smile of benevolence irradiated his countenance ; he swam to the side, and, delivering up his charge, fell into the arms of Mason—overcome by a variety of emotions, that certainly require no explanation.

To the scene that followed, few pens can do justice ; it was a mixture of joy, gratitude, and brotherly love, of which Camelford was the object ; and, to complete their satisfaction, the first person who met their eye, on entering the house, was Lillo, under the hands of Thompson, and in a situation that precluded all serious apprehension. He had been knocked down, and violently stunned ; for which rest was necessary, and the same being recommended to Camelford, they each retired to a warm bed.

The gallery of communication being burnt away, the fire was suffered to extend itself on the detached building ; the night was calm, and apprehension, on that account, ceased.

Thompson was incapable, from accident, of being useful to the cause. When Lillo was knocked down, two men, with cutlasses, attacked him; but retreating, he entered a room, and forcibly shut the door, which, when he again attempted to open, he found had fastened itself by a spring-lock; from which durance he was not released, till the labourers, and some neighbours, attracted by the fire, brought in the culprits, as a temporary place of confinement.

The parson and Mason had an engagement with the same two rogues, but lost them in the dark; nor did they appear again, till dragging in the Rev. Mr. Black, from the bed-chamber of Molly the dairy-maid, who was comely to look upon—nay, passing fair, in the eyes of the preacher.

A bowl of hot punch was smoking on the table, and proved no unacceptable relief, after the exertions of the night, when Mrs. Gray regretted the absence of the minister—“but the pious soul was, no doubt, offering up prayers and thanksgivings for their singular deliverance.”

Mason, whose mind still panted for revenge, beckoned Thompson out of the room, and giving some hint of his intention, they sallied forth in quest of this sanctified debauchee. The back-door, through which he was seen to emigrate, led into the garden; this they entered, and called him by name, but no answer was returned. It then struck Thompson, that, perhaps, the crafty priest had taken refuge in the '*Temple of Cloacina*,' situated at the end of a long walk. As they proceeded, Mason gathered a bunch of nettles, and Thompson again called. A trembling voice now answered, "For heaven's sake, gentlemen, spare my life—money I have none—I am not Mr. Gray."

"We know that, reverend sir," replied Thompson; "the good Mrs. Gray has sent you some warm clothing, and requires your pious company, as soon as you are dressed." This had the desired effect, and brought out the half-starved minister, requesting he might have the warm clothes.

"That you shall, sir," replied Thompson; and taking hold of both his hands, had him, in a moment, as completely horsed as

ever was schoolboy, and Mason gave him as good a flagellation with the nettles, as if Dr. Busby himself had been employed in the operation, calling out, at intervals, "Remember Mason, the steward—repent your evil deeds."

He did not stop to think of the

In vain he roared and struggled—Thompson was strong, and he knew the punishment to be just.

How good a to him—

At length the apparent mildness of his disposition forsook him; he lost all his christian patience, and swore like a trooper. The nettles worn to a stump, and the lawyer's revenge, in some measure satisfied, he was released, whilst Mason tauntingly inquired, "How do you like your *warm clothing*, now you are *dressed*?" But, instead of an answer, the usually slow-moving minister took to his heels, completely blistered from the shoulders downwards.

enough to

They now returned to the house, and informed Mrs. Gray, they had found the Rev. Mr. Black in a certain place, but so benumbed with cold, they were obliged to apply stimulants, which had the desired effect,

and being entirely warmed, they had no doubt but a night's rest would perfectly restore him.

The good Mrs. Gray thanked them for their care, and had no doubt, the pious man would remember them in his prayers.

"Yes, madam," replied the lawyer, significantly, "I think he will not easily forget us."

The sun had risen, and our three friends returned to the cave, to ease the anxiety their longer absence would occasion. Camelford and Lillo appeared at Mr. Gray's dinner-table; but the Rev. Mr. Black was unable to move, which was attributed solely to cold, as none of the party were acquainted with the *dressing* he had received. After their sociable repast, Gray intreated Camelford to name some reward—"If it were even half my possessions," said he, "it would be inadequate to the service you and your companions have rendered me."

"We have done our duty, sir," replied Camelford, "and that, to minds neither am-

bitious nor sordid, is sufficient gratification ; nay, it affords a delight infinitely superior to any that wealth can give, namely, self-approbation."

" But I shall see you again," said Gray ; " your dress bespeaks you strangers and seafaring men—you are not leaving the country immediately, I hope."

" Not immediately—we will see you again before we depart, and, for the present, take our leave."

Their arrival at the cave was greeted with heart-felt joy. " We have heard the whole of your adventure," said the senior, " and I, more than ever, exult in my penetration ; such presence of mind, fortitude, and courage, were surely never before united in so young a subject. Your amiable partner has wept at your danger, and smiled at your success ; my eyes, too, have played the woman, on purpose, I believe, to keep her in countenance."

Four months passed away in this romantick country pleasantly and usefully. The poor

and persecuted blessed their footsteps ; the rich oppressor stood in awe ; and the people in general, who neither feared their power, nor depended on their succour, revered the strangers, whose habitation no one knew, but whose persons every one respected.

The three housebreakers were brought to trial, and condemned, at which the whole country rejoiced ; for, from their own confession, it appeared they had, for years, committed the most atrocious enormities.

The Americans left not a nook for twenty miles round unexplored. Their collection of natural curiosities, and drawings (executed by Thompson) were the most correct and varied, and to the artist or virtuoso would have been invaluable.

The period of their sojourning in Scotland expired, and their next encampment was in a distant part of Westmoreland, for which due preparations were made. But as Fanny was far advanced in pregnancy, it was decided that she and Camelford should take the diligence from Glasgow to Kendal. A very particular direction to Furness Abbey

was given by the senior to Camelford, with a purse containing ten guineas; and the pedestrians set forward, disguised as usual.

Camelford was habited, in every respect, as a gentleman, and at Glasgow purchased a travelling coat for Fanny. They proceeded, with safety and comfort, till the last stage to Carlisle, when Fanny was attacked with violent spasms, and otherwise much indisposed; she bore, however, her pains with great fortitude, till they stopped to water the horses at Gretna Green, when it was found impossible to proceed. The next day her disorder increased. Medical assistance was sent for to Carlisle; but, ere it arrived, a miscarriage took place which left her in imminent danger.

Camelford was in a state of distraction; he never left her apartment, except to superintend the culinary preparations recommended by the physician; for, in cookery, the Gretna Green kitchen was wofully deficient.

A fortnight elapsed before Fanny was declared convalescent; the third week she was

able to take the air, and the gentlemen of the faculty declined any further attendance.

When Camelford had satisfied these worthy practitioners, he found himself in possession of an exhausted purse, and a long bill at the inn undischarged. He wrote a descriptive letter to the senior, which would doubtless bring the desired supply, though he had many painful fears of its not finding their abode; and these were soon realized, in the dreadful certainty that he had, by some accident, mislaid the direction. Every place was searched—every inquiry made, but it was irretrievable.

A perfect stranger, without supplies, or the means of raising them—with an invalid companion, whose situation required indulgence and composure of mind—his state was truly deplorable, the more so, from having no one to consult; for Fanny was ignorant of their circumstances, and, for the sake of her health, he wished to keep her so.

Under pretence of inquiring about the coach, he, one day, went to Carlisle, thinking it possible, a letter from the senior

might be at the post-office, who, he knew, would be uneasy at their delay. There was a letter—but not from Furness Abbey; it was from America, and the postage reduced him to the last shilling. The contents stated that his friend had transmitted three hundred pounds to a bank in London, and that the danger of his return was as great as ever.

The former part of this intelligence was incapable of affording Camelford pleasure; three pounds, at the present moment, would have been more acceptable than three hundred in perspective. He returned to his Fanny, melancholy and dejected, and, in the overflowing of his heart made a full disclosure of their situation, which she received with that firmness and magnanimity, the characteristics not only of her country, but individually of herself. Folding him in her arms, she painted in glowing colours, their many wonderful escapes both by sea and land, and her firm reliance on *Him*, who suffereth not a sparrow to fall, without his especial notice; “reflect, my beloved companion,” she continued, “on the attachment of our friends, and depend upon it succour

will speedily arrive through their means : the senior, one of the best of men, is anxiously concerned for our welfare; even were he not so, we have a firm reliance on the attachment of Thompson and Lillo, who will move heaven and earth to discover our retreat, which, lying on the direct road, between Ben Lomond and Kendal, can easily be traced."

The next morning two chaises drove up to the door, with each a young couple, who required the officiating priest of Hymen. Camelford, whilst loitering about, inquired of the postillions, whence they came, and if both couples were going to be married?

"Only one," was the answer—"the young looking pair, who are very rich, and pay their way like emperors."

Trivial as this information appeared, it had an instantaneous effect on Camelford. He had examined the countenance of this young bridegroom, as he walked several times before his window, and saw nothing repulsive; on the contrary, he fancied its ge-

neral character was benevolence, with a slight tincture of credulity.

He immediately formed a plan, and instantaneously reduced it to practice; the prelude to which was, drawing the following bill:—

“Glasgow, Sept. 12, 1776.”

£. 10 0 0

“Three months after date, I promise to pay the sum of ten pounds to the person who has confidence enough in me to exchange this note, and to stand his friend, though at the hazard of my life, whenever circumstances demand it.

“CHARLES CAMELFORD.”

Camelford had not the smallest idea that any person could be found credulous enough to give cash for such a production; but he thought it would lead to an explanation, and if the gentleman's heart was as large as his reputed purse, good to him must follow.

It has been shewn in the first volume of these Memoirs, how his plan succeeded; he had to deal with a youth, unversed in the ways of the world—unacquainted with

the nature of bills, and unsuspecting of fraud, both by education and habit.

Camelford, having written the above, kissed Fanny—bade her keep up her spirits, and promised to be with her early in the evening. He once more retraced his steps to Carlisle, arrived at the Bush inn, a few minutes before the wedding party returned—introduced himself, as has been related, and to his astonishment, and indeed confusion, received the money—hastened from the house, and was at Gretna Green, before he had convinced himself that such things were. In the course of conversation he made himself master of Romney's place of abode, with a firm determination to restore the money the first opportunity.

On his return he found Fanny in tears; for the landlord had been importunate, even to rudeness.

“I do not blame him,” said Camelford; “he knows us not, and cannot afford to lose money by strangers.” He then related his adventure, at which Fanny shook her head—

“It is true,” he continued, “I have done an action that cannot be defended, except upon the plea of necessity; but as the young man shall be repaid, both principal and interest, we must reconcile our minds by calling it a loan, though rather surreptitiously obtained.”

Having paid his bill, he resolved to set off, next day, for Kendal, which was his original destination, and near which, he doubted not, his friends would be found. Just then the landlord entered, with information, that a sailor-looking man was inquiring for him. “Shew him in,” said Camelford.

Lillo—for he it was—was in ecstasy to find them both alive. “Captain,” said the honest fellow, “God bless you, and my dear lady too! I determined to seek and find you, or die in the attempt; for, I feel, I cannot live without you. I have inquired, at every town and village between here and Kendal, and should have pursued my way, even to Loch Lomond. What has detained you? why did not you write? The poor senior was miserable, for fear cash should run low, and has sent you ten guineas.”

Camelford explained every thing without reserve, and then inquired after Thompson, and the rest.

“All well—never better—the cavern of Furness is the most comfortable place imaginable. Thompson would fain have come along; but I persuaded him against it, for I have a shrewd notion, there is an attachment between him and Mary Mason.”

Next day, the diligence conveyed them to Carlisle, and Lillo made inquiry, at the Bush, for the wedding party; but they were gone. Camelford called at the bank, to know by what means the three hundred pounds could be procured from London; the banker promised to write, and undertook to procure an answer in five days. During this time they amused themselves with seeing every thing, in and about Carlisle, worthy the attention of travellers, and likewise relieved the fears of their friends, by letters, hoping to see them in a week.

The answer arrived from London, but the banker refused to deliver the money, except to Charles Clement, the name by which he had

requested his American friend to address him. Perplexed and puzzled, he knew not how to decide—three hundred pounds was a serious sum, and twelve months would elapse, ere he could expect another remittance. [A pause.]

“Captain,” said Lillo, “take my advice—go to London. Three hundred pounds is worth fetching; the journey will do you good—it will do Mrs. Camelford no harm—and, for my own part, I should like it of all things; we need not be long absent, and, when you return, you can add something to the general stock—not that I am partial to this vagabond life, but, perhaps, any other would expose you to danger, and rather than harm should come to my noble captain, I would consent to remain a gipsy to my dying day.”

“Lillo,” replied Camelford, “if it were not for my Fanny’s lack of comforts, and my own intense feelings, which sometimes overpower and almost distract me, I could not only bear, but enjoy our present life. Our friends are all people of education and sound morals; harmony reigns in the society, and we have opportunities of benefiting man-

kind, which no other course of life could so amply afford."

"Yes, captain, at the expense of broken heads and bloody noses. Well, well—every man to his humour; I knew a person in Philadelphia, who preferred a deal board to a feather-bed, but he never could persuade me to adopt that opinion. This sleeping in stone quarries suits you well; to be sure, it is romantick enough in summer, but when the frost sets in, I should not be surprised if we were all frozen to death."

"If the danger you speak of be real, how shall we account for the escape of our friends, who have encountered it two preceding winters? But what says my Fanny? Shall we explore this wonder of the world? Shall we go to London?"

"I think 'twere best, if it can be done without endangering your personal safety. We have, one way or another, been a heavy tax upon our companions, and it would give me pleasure unspeakable, to shew them we are neither selfish nor ungrateful."

Prior to their departure, a letter was transmitted to the cavern, stating Camelford's reasons for so unexpected a journey, and promising to join them in as short a time as possible.

Lillo would be an outside passenger, as more suitable to his appearance. The inside contained, besides Fanny and Camelford, a rider in the button line, from Birmingham, and a clergyman. As soon as they were clear of the town, the divine addressed the button-merchant:—

“ Pray, sir, how are you for churches in Birmingham?”

“ Churches, sir!”

“ Aye—how many have you!”

“ Two.”

“ Only two!—Don't you think they'd stand another?”

“ Stand another?—What do you mean, sir?”

“Why, if a new church were erected in your town, don’t you think it would *tell*?— Might not something handsome be *netted* by it? Do you think consecration could be obtained?”

“I can’t say—that depends on the bishop.”

“Aye, there it is! These bishops—these bishops,”—shaking his head.

The hardwareman did not approve of a parson shaking his head at a bishop. “It ill becomes,” says he, “one of your cloth to speak lightly of bishops. What should we do without them? Would you wish us in the same *savage* state as the *Americans*, who have neither *bishops* nor *lords*?”

This roused Camelford—“America, my good sir,” said he, “is by no means in the savage state you seem to imagine. ’Tis true, they acknowledge no head of the church, but the Deity. Bishops may be very well in their way, but the Americans can do without them. Titles are not held in much estimation there either, except the title of an

honest man. There are four lines from the inimitable pen of Dr. Goldsmith, which exactly correspond with the sentiments of these (in your opinion) savage people:—

“Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country’s pride,
If once destroy’d, can never be supply’d.”

The iron-worker, thus unexpectedly answered, leaned back, in a fit of the *dumps*. But the church-building parson, who might literally be said to travel in that line, expatiated on the utility of steeples, belfries, green pews, and plain pews—stuffed kneeling stools, and those made of straw—velvet pulpit cushions, and marble fonts; in short, he estimated, and clearly convinced his auditors, that a handsome church, upon his plan, could be built for the small sum of four thousand and fifty pounds nine shillings and sixpence, and then exhibited a coloured print of one, which, he said, he always placed at the head of his subscription list.

On the third day they were set down at the Bull-and-mouth, having dropped the ma-

nufacturers of buttons and churches on the road.

Camelford's first care was to clothe the whole party in a manner suitable to the sphere in which they were moving. This completed, he and Lillo strolled into a coffee-house, where they were scarcely seated, when the only person in the room, besides themselves, jumped up, and, seizing his hand, exclaimed, "Capt. Camelford, I rejoice to see you!"

Camelford easily recognized an old friend of his father, a merchant from Philadelphia, who had always been excessively partial to him. Over a glass of wine, they talked of America—"My friend," said Mr. Smith, "you have nothing to fear from me; torture should not extort any thing to your disadvantage; but ours is not the country to which you can safely return yet; wait a few years—time, which brings about strange revolutions, will work one in your favour, and you will return to your native land with joy."

"Oh, never—never!" replied Camelford; "joy and I can never more associate. Joy

to a murderer!—a parricide! Oh my friend! my mother's death sits heavy on my soul! Though the blow was involuntary, it softens not the anguish I shall ever feel for her untimely end!"

The merchant struck with astonishment, said, "I beg your pardon, but really this is all new. I was not upon the spot, to be sure, when this unfortunate affair happened; but, on my return, the death of Col. —— was the common topick of conversation, unconnected with that of your mother. Surely you are imposed upon"——"Oh, no! this arm gave the deadly blow; she rushed between me and her vile paramour, and received my sword in her bosom."

"My dear young friend," said Mr. Smith, "compose yourself, and let us change the subject. I hope you are married."——"I am, and as happy in that respect as man can be. Dine with me at the Bull-and-mouth, to-morrow; there is not a person on earth, Mrs. Camelford will more rejoice to see."

"I shall attend you with pleasure; in the mean time make my affectionate compliments

to my lovely Fanny, as I used to call her, and tell her, I hope to see her face dressed in smiles, as it was wont to be, whenever Daddy Smith called at her father's."

This evening was devoted to Drury-lane Theatre, to which they walked, with a view of shewing Fanny the brilliancy and beauty of the shops by candle-light, which certainly, to a stranger, are objects of wonder and admiration. They seated themselves in a front row of the centre box. At the extreme end of the same bench sat a well dressed young man, who stared about him with an eye of vacancy—lolloped with his legs upon the seat, and stretched and gaped, as if he had not slept for the last twenty-four hours.

Unfortunately, our party were without a play-bill, and wishing to know whether the performance they were come to witness, was tragic or comic, Camelford addressed his neighbour—"Pray, sir, what is the play to-night?"

"The play!—Oh! aye!—the play is—
'Miching Mallico'—it means mischief; but

you'll know more anon—'tis a villainous business—Oh! here are the players."

When Kemble made his appearance, struck by the dignity of his manner, Camelford again applied to his neighbour for information.

"That, sir, is—Mr. *Longpause*—as you'll see, if you can avoid sleeping. I understand Dibdin means to set music to his pauses, which will be a means of keeping the audience awake with horrid scraping.

"Oh! here comes Mrs. Siddons, another of the *Longpausers*—they are a *large* family. *Allegro* for me"—and away he went.

An elegantly dressed, beautiful woman, who sat behind them, now took possession of the vacant seat, and at the conclusion of the act, said to Camelford,—

"You seem a stranger, sir; I was sorry to see you fall into such hands for information. The coxcomb you have been engaged with, is a contemptible animal, called, in this town, a box-lobby lounge; they set up for

great criticks, and supply the want of talent by quizzing, and this contemptible species of wit he has been exercising upon you."

Every inquiry respecting the performance, was now readily and sensibly answered by the lady; and Fanny observed, in a whisper, that she must certainly be a person of consequence, by the elegance of her language and the delicacy of her sentiments. At the end of the play, the lady looked at her watch, and prepared for her departure. Camelford presented his hand to lead her out, at the same time saying, "Is it safe for a lady to leave the theatre alone? Permit me, madam, to see you to your carriage."

"I am much obliged to you, sir; I ordered my people to be here about half past nine, but there is no depending upon servants; however, if you will have the goodness to take charge of me, and this fair lady can spare you for a few minutes, I shall be tempted to trespass upon your politeness, to see me into the next street."

Fanny bowed a cheerful assent, and Camelford escorted the lady to her habitation,

which bore a very handsome appearance; he then wished her a good night, but she insisted upon his taking one glass of wine, to their better acquaintance. This he would have declined, but the lady was peremptory; he must pledge her in one glass, to the health of his beautiful companion. To object longer, would have been a rudeness Camelford was incapable of; he therefore attended her into a handsome apartment, followed by a servant with wine, of whom she inquired if supper was ready, and was answered in the affirmative.

At her request he seated himself by her on the sofa, when, pouring out two glasses of wine, she said, "Come, sir, here is 'Love and opportunity,' at the same time giving him a look, that none but such a novice as Camelford could have mistaken.

In vain she replenished the glasses; Camelford firmly refused taking any more, though assailed with all the battery of soft looks and plaintive sighs. "Is it possible," said she, "you can be this abstemious creature—this Joseph, you pretend? Has the society of a woman no attractions?"

“ Oh yes?—no man is more sensible of the attractions of a beautiful woman than myself. My wife, for instance—you saw her at the play—she is the delight of my heart, and, as far as I can judge, life would be insupportable without her.”

“ Your wife!” said she, with a sneer—
“ Oh! I see you are one of the canting tribe.”
Starting from his seat, he was rushing towards the door, when she roared out, “ B—t your eyes! won’t you pay for the wine?” at the same time ringing the bell. Struck dumb with amazement, he gazed upon her with horror. Was it possible such words could fall from the lips of a creature, fashioned by Nature in her most finished mould, where elegance and delicacy appeared to strive for pre-eminence? Such were Camelford’s thoughts; for words refused their utterance, which were interrupted by the waiter’s demanding five shillings for the wine. Camelford, not comprehending the business, but disdaining a parley, threw down five shillings——“ There’s half-a-guinea for the room, your honour.”

“ I’ll tell you what, friend,” said Camelford, “ I shall not submit to any more extortion. I have already paid for wine, I neither desired nor drank; but, at your peril, make any demand for a room in this lady’s house!”

“ This lady’s house!—why, you must be a pretty *flat*, to be *queered* in that manner. This is a bagnio, you brought the lady as you call her in, and must pay for it, must not he, Miss Polly?”

He now comprehended the whole business, but determined to part with no more money; indeed he could not; for Fanny was the purse-keeper, and paying for the wine had taken his all. Unfortunately, or perhaps the reverse, it so happened however, his staunch defence, the oaken cudgel, was left in the Theatre, but he was tolerably expert in the science of boxing, and determined to defend himself.

The waiter seeing the blood mount into his face, expected a storm, and rang the bell most furiously. At this moment, Camelford would have escaped, but the woman placed herself against the door, screaming and call-

ing out murder, which brought two more waiters, one of whom made a blow at our hero, which he avoided by stooping down, and returned it with such force, that his reeling antagonist fell against the table, which upset and left them in total darkness.

In the confusion, Camelford darted down stairs, and was leaving the house, when half a dozen watchmen who had been summoned on the first alarm, secured and carried him to the round-house, followed by Miss Polly and one of the waiters.

The constable of the night began his interrogatory, in the usual way—"Well! what have you got to say for yourself? Ah, Poll! are you there? Some *row*, I suppose, eh?

The waiter then made his complaint:—" *This here gemman* brings Miss Poll to our house, orders a bottle of the best, and then refuses to pay the regular charge. Upon our civilly *argufying* the matter with him, he knocks down our Sam—breaks all the furniture and glasses, and then thinks to *sherry*. But Missis was up to his *gammon*—she was

not to be *done* by a *younker*, and so here we have him *smug*."

"A very black business, indeed," said the petty officer, "I thought you smarted enough last time you were before me—twenty *quid*, I've a notion, would make a hole in your pocket now, and we can't let you off for less. It's *surprisable* you should not take warning—*these here* women will bring you to the gallows, one day, depend upon't—remember I tell you so. Let me see—aye! this is the fourth time you've been here."

"It's a lie," said Camelford, from the impulse of the moment, unable to smother his just indignation; but immediately checking himself, and ashamed of the intemperate expression he had inadvertently made use of, he continued, "I beg your pardon, the irritability of my nature never so much got the better of my prudence; you have taxed me with crimes I never committed, and placed me on a level with characters I despise." He then related the whole business, with truth and openness, that carried conviction, and concluded with demanding his liberty.

The constable and waiter now held a whispering parley, after which the former said, "Sir, you speak in a *surprisable* manner, and like an honest man. As to this here woman, she's *not* of *nò consequence*, she's one of our *terrible Marys*, and generally comes here once or twice a week; but I'll not be *queered* by her this bout. I mistook you for one of these here box loungers, and it's quite *unpossible* to be up to their *rigs*. So Sir, as I've another set waiting, and as it's my *dooty* to *derange* all disputes, give my clerk five *hog*, and the waiter a *quid*, and you are at liberty."

"I must candidly acknowledge my ignorance," replied Camelford, "your speech is not exactly what I understand; but as most likely it relates to money, I honestly own I have none; but if the waiter will accompany me to the Bull and Mouth, he shall cheerfully be paid what you award; but first have the goodness to explain the *hog* and *quid*. I should from my own circumscribed knowledge, conceive they related to pigs and tobacco."

Here was a general laugh, accompanied with a look of contempt at his ignorance. "Where was you born, master?" said the constable:—"Not within the sound of Bow Bells, I'll besworn," replied the waiter; "why, Sir, a hog's a shilling, and a quid is one pound one."

"Very well," said Camelford, "go with me, and you shall have the money; for I find I have innocently borne the appearance of blame, through my ignorance of the town, and 'tis fit I should pay for my learning."

Fanny and Lillo's fears for his safety could only be equalled by their joy at his return. During supper he related minutely the occurrences of the evening, which filled his wife with wonder and disgust. Could such things be? A veracity less undoubted than her Camelford's could not have convinced her, that their elegant companion in the box, and the abandoned inmate of a bagnio, could be one and the same person. To complete the adventure, his pocket-book was missing; but the contents were of no value, or even consequence, except the address of

the young man, from whom he obtained the £10 at Carlisle; this loss gave him serious concern, his integrity was pledged, and he could now perhaps never redeem it. The evening, or rather the hour before bed, was occupied in melancholy reflections on human depravity, and ended with a determination to join their friends in the North as speedily as possible.

Camelford went into Lombard Street next morning. The banker acknowledged the receipt of £300 for the use of Charles Clement, but could not with safety pay it till his person was identified. He returned to his inn, spiritless and dejected, till Lillo reminded him of his friend the American merchant, who was to dine with him, and whose testimony would be sufficient proof of his reality. Mr. Smith came to his appointment, and readily undertook to vouch for his friend, whom he would attend the next day, accompanied by a respectable London merchant of his acquaintance.

Fanny was then introduced, and recognized with smiles of pleasure by her valued friend, who, after dinner, presented her with

a valuable watch, as a token of his almost paternal regard.

At 5 o'clock Mr. Smith had an appointment, to which he pressed Camelford and Lillo to attend him, promising to introduce them to a very pleasant party, and assuring Fanny he would restore them safe in a couple of hours. On their return without Mr. Smith, they found Fanny seated at tea with a well dressed young man, whom she introduced as a gentleman who had rendered her a singular mark of attention.

To amuse herself during their absence, she strolled into a bookseller's shop, with a view to purchase one of the monthly publications ; and expressing her fears of not finding her road back, this gentleman had politely offered himself as her escort, and had added to the obligation, by sitting down to tea.

Camelford thanked him, and begged he would prolong his visit, it would be charity, they were strangers ; and conversation with a person of his knowledge of the town, would be both pleasant and profitable.

In the course of the evening, Fanny winding up her watch broke the spring, which the stranger very politely offered to repair, as he was, he said, a watchmaker of the first repute in town, his name Sharp, and his shop in Cornhill, where he should be happy to see them. Camelford, unsuspecting of fraud, and pleased with his manners, relinquished the watch, and beheld it for the last time : it was in the hands of a swindler, and thus he bought his second day's experience. The next he hoped would terminate their stay in this deceptions town, where iniquity stalked abroad, and vice reared her destructive head.

According to appointment, he went to Lombard Street next morning, attended by the two merchants ; and as he was receiving his money, an officer, who happened to be in the bank, eyed him with more than common attention, and on his return to Bull and Mouth Street, seemed to be dodging him. The circumstance was of itself unpleasant, and coupled with his fears of detection, caused unusual emotion ; at all events, London was no place of safety, either to their persons

or property, and next morning was fixed for their departure.

The cloth was drawn, and they had just toasted their friends in the North, when three men burst into the room, and inquired "which was Charles Camelford?"

"I am the man."

"Then I have a warrant to apprehend you, on a charge of murder committed in America."

Camelford, with a look of anguish at his Fanny, who leaned nearly in a state of insensibility upon Lillo, surrendered himself; and giving his pocket-book to his wife, was led away by the retainers of justice, and lodged in Newgate.

Upon giving the jailer a guinea, he was accommodated with a decent apartment; and treated with humanity. The informant he was told was an officer named Travis, who had been in America all the war, and returned at its conclusion. Inquiring if he might

see his friends ? he was answered in the affirmative, and indulged with pen and ink, when he immediately wrote a consolatory letter to Fanny, and a note to Lillo, requesting to see him as soon as possible.

He had scarcely breakfasted next morning, when an elderly lady requested to see him. Unknown to any female in London, except his wife, he fancied there must be some mistake ; there could however be no harm in seeing the person, and she was desired to walk in.

Preceded by the keeper, entered a well dressed woman, of the middle age, but evidently lame ; she hobbled up to Camelford by the help of her stick, threw her arms round his neck, and whispered—" Lillo." Then in a loud voice said, " My dear nephew ! have I found you at last ? since my arrival in England, I have been constant in my inquiries, and now alas ! to find you in this wretched place ! your poor uncle will break his heart !" Then putting a guinea into the attendant's hand, she continued, " For heaven's sake treat him well." Camelford played his

part, by inquiries after his uncle and cousins, and how long she had left America?

The keeper was now summoned to another part of the prison, and gratified by the old lady's guinea, made no scruple of leaving them together. The moment he had turned the key, Lillo threw off his cloak, gown, petticoat, and bonnet, during which, he informed Camelford of his plan, and in five minutes, they had completely changed characters; and Camelford was practising his aunt's hobbling gait when the jailer returned, and told the lady the coachman could wait no longer, having another fare to attend. They parted in apparent grief and the promise of another visit on the morrow.

Camelford told the coachman to drive to St. Paul's Church-Yard; and threw himself on the seat deeply penetrated with gratitude, though not entirely divested of fears for Lillo's safety. But when he explained his wonderful escape to Fanny, she blessed the faithful creature, the true friend, the preserver of herself and her Camelford.

A longer stay at this inn would have been

every way dangerous, he therefore paid their bill, and called a coach, which was ordered to Cheapside; this he discharged, and took another to Lad-Lane, where Mr. Smith resided. Leaving Fanny and their packages at the Swan, his next care was to look after Lillo. Accordingly, disguised in the sailor's habit, he retraced his way to Newgate, and stationed himself where he could see every person who either went in, or came out.

Lillo, overjoyed at his friend's release, thought not of the consequences to himself; he knew they could not be dangerous though they might be unpleasant. When his attendant brought dinner, he was muffled up in his handkerchief, pretending to have the tooth-ache, and very seriously consulted him upon the means likely to give ease, without extraction, which he had a decided objection to.

Camelford waited at his post, till nearly dark, he then returned to Lad-lane, determined to consult his American friend, on the means to be employed for Lillo's emancipation. Inquiring for Mr. Smith, he was shewn to his apartment, and in few words, gave him to understand the predicament in which he

stood. Mr. Smith laughed heartily at Lillo's ingenuity, and congratulated Camelford, on his wonderful escape; "All we have to do I conceive," said he, "is to put a good face on the matter, demand his release, and threaten them with damages for false imprisonment. Do you know the name of the informant?"

"Travis—Lieut. Travis."

"The luckiest thing in the world, he came over in my ship, I shall find little difficulty in tracing him, and then trust to me for your friend's liberation. But," continued he, "you must not remain here another hour; all the principal inns will be watched; but I know a clean comfortable house in Holborn, where you will be perfectly safe, and where I hope to conduct your preserver to-morrow, before the fashionable world have finished their breakfasts." Mr. Smith ordered a coach, and seeing them comfortably accommodated in Holborn, proceeded to a house much frequented by military gentlemen, particularly those who had lately crossed the Atlantic. On inquiring if Lieut. Travis was there? the waiter answered yes! and was ordered to call him out. Shewn into a private room, Mr.

Smith used very little ceremony in pointing out the meanness, the infamy of Travis's conduct; "A British officer degraded to the rank of an informer! were I your master, sir, I would cashier you, were I your mess-mate, I would shun you. Nay, sir, put on no fierce looks to me, or I go to the next apartment, and expose the whole of this infamous business. The person whom you wish to prosecute, is my particular friend, a man of honour, and every way superior to him, who for the sake of the reward, would take away his life. But sir, my friend is, thank Heaven! not at your mercy, your associates have seized the wrong person, and very heavy damages are the consequences of false imprisonment. I shall expect you to meet me to-morrow morning at Newgate, by ten o'clock, and there substantiate your charge against Mr. Lillo, who is the person now ignominiously confined, or beg his pardon, own your error, and instantly take the proper and speedy means to liberate him." Alarm and fear succeeded passion in the mind of Travis; though he was, in every sense of the word, an informer, he felt no honour in the appellation, and dreaded an exposure to his companions of the mess, who would to a man

have hooted him from their society. The next day he was true to his appointment. "Is this the person, Lieut. Travis, against whom you laid the information?"

"No, sir ! that gentleman is a stranger to me."

Lillo threw aside his handkerchief, and, supported by the presence of Smith, harangued on the injury he had suffered—"Were the person and character of an innocent man to be at the mercy of every wretch, who, for a bribe, would descend to the employment of a spy—a tool—an informer?"

The jailer, who now clearly saw the trick that had been played, thought it most prudent to keep his own counsel, and thereby secure himself from blame, on a charge of neglect, or, perhaps, collusion.

The governor was sent for, and Lillo's release demanded, but could not be granted without certain forms. Lieut. Travis must go before a magistrate, and make an oath, who would then write an order for the gentleman's enlargement.

This was soon accomplished; the expenses and fees fell upon this honourable military hero, who submitted to whatever was demanded, to save himself from the disgrace of a prosecution.

The meeting of the friends may be easily imagined; but Mr. Smith would not suffer them to waste much time in words, for, in less than an hour, he gave them his blessing, and saw them off, in a chaise, for Barnet.

Whilst they are on their journey, it may not be amiss to look after the "Gipseys of the North," who passed their time in the usual way. They were the poor's friends on all occasions; injuries were redressed, without respect to persons, yet no one ever suspected the place of their abode.

To counteract the tediousness of the long evenings, which now rapidly approached, a chess-board was provided, at which Thompson and the parson were adepts; together with books on a variety of useful subjects, which the senior read aloud, whilst the females employed themselves in knitting—an art they had learnt in Scotland, and which

proved of the utmost service to the poor for miles round their abode, who, in return, sold them eggs, cheese, bread, butter, and milk, of the best quality.

About six miles north of Furness Abbey, on the borders of a hanging wood, which skirted, and nearly reached, the summit of a lofty mountain, some distance from any habitation, lived a melancholy being—in the common acceptation of the word; but his own individual ideas were, apparently, the source of happiness. He had been an idiot from his birth; but general humanity, and a peculiar fondness for the brute creation, were the governing principles of a mind divested of reasoning faculties. The unfeeling treatment of parish officers had driven this imbecile being to seek a situation remote from the haunts of men. He built himself a clay hut, and surrounded it with a wall of the same materials. His family consisted of a sheep-cur who was his constant companion at bed, and board, and about fifty domestick animals, of the bird tribe, namely, cocks and hens, which were all perfectly white. These he never destroyed, but supported himself by selling their eggs, and living on the produce,

assisted by the contributions of strangers, who visited Jemmy's hut, as an object of curiosity.

For fifteen years he had resided on this spot, an isolated, harmless being, usually known by the appellation of "Jemmy of the Wood." The robins built in clusters round his hut, and the hedge-sparrow found an hospitable asylum. The few crumbs that fell from his table were scattered in his court, and a wish to preserve life, rather than destroy it, was the governing principle of Jemmy of the Wood. He was the friend of the brute tribe—and as for the human, they came not near him. His beard he kept down, by rubbing a rough stone over his chin every morning—a method now become fashionable, under letters patent.

One day, as he was seated on a verdant mount, surrounded by his family, the cry of hounds assailed his ears. A timid hare came slowly up the hill—for her strength was nearly exhausted—followed by three or four dogs, at no great distance. Approaching the place where Jemmy stood, she uttered a cry, responsive to his feelings, and lay down

at his feet. The poor fellow, though bereft of reason, had more than his portion of tenderness; he took up the little frightened creature, placed it in his bosom, and said, "Jemmy of the Wood will save thee."

Just then the squire, and owner of the pack, rode up, inquiring for the hare. "She's here," said Jemmy, "and her heart beats so fast"——The sportsmen, perceiving the idiot's humanity, had checked their chase, assailed him with oaths, and an application of the horsewhip. Jemmy, terrified at these monsters' rage, gently laid down the hare; but she could yield no more diversion—her heart, alas, was burst!

A short time after this, some pheasants were turned into the wood, by order of the squire, to breed; but not, perhaps, liking the soil or situation, they rambled away—not a bird remained, and the blame rested on Jemmy and his dog. The circumstance of the hare had kindled a spark in the squire's mind, which the loss of the pheasants had blown into a blaze. His gamekeeper had orders to shoot the dog, and two labourers were sent to pull down his hut. Poor Jemmy

was innocently seated at the door, feeding and caressing his dependant brutes; when the report of a gun, close to his ear, and the cries of faithful Trim, aroused the small spark of reason he possessed; he started up, looked round, in alarm, and then, with an idiotic smile of sorrow, plaintively exclaimed, "Oh dear, you have killed poor Trim!"

"Aye," cried the inhuman keeper, "it is his honour's order; your pig-stie must come down too, and you may think yourself well off, that you are not sent to prison, or on board a man of war; such idle rascals as you ought not to be tolerated in a christian country.—Why don't you begin?" The labourers reluctantly came forward; poor Jemmy silently drove his fowls into the wood, and bore Trim under his arm.

In half an hour, the clay-built cot was level with the ground, and the gamekeeper retired, threatening transportation, if Jemmy dared again intrude upon his master's domain.

The poor fellow had rambled to another extremity of the wood, and, seated under an

oak, was talking to his feathered friends, about their murdered companion. The senior and Thompson sat on the opposite hill, whither they had walked that morning, to take a sketch of this beautiful and romantick wood. The sight of a man, of such appearance, and so surrounded, in a place six miles from any habitation, was a matter of wonder and astonishment; the latter was very predominant, and induced them to cross the valley. They soon reached the brow, and beheld an object worthy the pencil of a Louthembourg, and the commiseration of a Howard.

Seated on a cop, under the shade of a beautiful oak, sat a figure, the most forlorn; in years he appeared about forty, of low stature, with an aspect pale and meagre; his clothing was the poorest that could be imagined, and on his countenance sat sorrow inexpressible, mixt with a vacant stare, that said, "All is not right within." On his left lay the remains of poor Trim, which his hand gently pressed; whilst one of his fowls, seemingly of great age, perched on his knee. The senior thought he perceived a tear stray down his cheek, whilst he stroked the head of his favourite chanticler, and, in pitiable accents,

said, "Trim can't bark any more! Poor Jemmy's bow wow has good teeth, but he bit not the squire."

Just then espying the senior and Thompson, he ran towards them, with his hat in his hand—"If you come to buy eggs, Jemmy has none—they broke them all! The squire does not love eggs; but if you'll stay a day or two, my whiteys will lay more." He then called them by their names, and they approached, permitting him to handle them in the most familiar manner. "But here's old Peter," said he, taking up the bird, "he has crowed for Jemmy ten summers; you shall hear him." Then putting him down, and patting his back, continued, "Poor P! crow for Jemmy." The bird immediately flapped his wings, and made the valley resound with his shrill tones.

"What a lesson is here, Thompson, to the unfeeling mind!" exclaimed the senior; "the humanity of this poor idiot puts sanity to the blush."

Jemmy had seated himself again by the side of his faithful cur, on whom he fixed a

look of sorrow. The senior addressed him, "Where do you live, Jemmy?"

"I don't know—they have pulled down Jemmy's-house—the squire says, I must go away. Come, and I'll shew you what they've done." Then taking the dog under his arm, he led the way into the wood, followed by his feathered companions. They soon reached the place of his former residence; but all was laid waste—scarcely a vestige remained. "Who," said Thompson, "could be so inhuman?"

"The squire does not love my whiteys," replied Jemmy, "and Trim barked at the keeper."

They soon discovered that a cruel act of oppression had been practised on this poor, unoffending creature, and determined not to return without being of some use; they, therefore, fell to work, and patched up a little hovel, to serve him for the night, fully resolved to build him a house on a spot where his oppressor had no power.

“ Here’s four eggs, my whiteys have just laid in yonder bush—you won’t hurt poor Trim, will you?”

Jemmy spoke the last words with so much feeling, and such a tender look, whilst he smoothed the forehead of his deceased favourite, that Thompson turned away, unable to conceal his emotion. In vain they endeavoured to persuade him to bury his dog. “ What,” said he, “ lay him in the ground!—No, no! poor Trim is cold enough already!—Jemmy will keep him warm in his bosom!”

Finding it impossible to separate the forlorn being from his once-faithful companion, they separated, Jemmy carrying the breathless object of his attention, and followed by his feathered retinue, accompanying them to the edge of the wood. For miles they could look back, but Jemmy was still there——“ Surely,” said the senior, lifting up his eyes to heaven, “ the Great Author of the Universe will not look with impunity on deeds like this! I do not wish for power, except where instances occur as in the present case; but, surely, the injuries of this poor creature call loudly for redress!”

“ And he shall have it,” replied Thompson; “ our power, though limited, is still able, I trust, to avenge his cause; but, first, we must place him beyond the jurisdiction of his bloated, purse-proud enemy, and that, I hope, to-morrow will effect.”

On the morrow the friends set off, on the amiable errand of benevolence, dressed in the gipsy costume. On their way they called at a small farmer's, who usually supplied them with eggs, &c. and borrowed working implements. The honest man also sent his two labourers along with them; for Jemmy of the Wood was known to him, and he had a feeling heart. When they had nearly ascended the hill on the borders of the wood, they looked around for Jemmy, but he was not there; they called, but no one answered; they explored the thickest part of a neighbouring coppice, and beheld him seated by a spring; Trim laying across his knee, and his poultry drinking the pure element with much seeming thirst. He started at the sight of his fellow-beings, from whom alone he apprehended mischief, and, taking the dog in his arms, was going to fly; but, seeing the senior, stopped, and addressed him,

“ Oh ! is it you ? I thought the squire had sent for Trim ; but he should not have had him ! I have brought my whiteys to drink —I forgot them yesterday.”

“ Jemmy,” said the senior, “ thou shalt live on the moor beyond the wood ; there the squire has no power, and we will build thee a house.”

“ Will you, indeed ? and will you let my whiteys perch within, and make a bed for Trim ? He wants a place to lie on, for he can’t run any more.”

The peasants led the way over the top of the hill to a plain beneath, which, for want of shelter, was both bleak and cold ; to remedy this they planned a fire-place, a convenience his last habitation could not boast. All hands went to work except Jemmy, whom they left in the wood making a grave for his lost companion, which the senior had with difficulty prevailed upon him to bury, under a promise of buying all his eggs for two months to come. They cut up sods, which formed substantial walls, and by the evening raised it six feet high. Wood was

necessary to support the roof, which they hoped to complete the day following; and returning through the wood, found Jemmy seated by the grave, over which he had fantastically placed sticks in a circular form, interwoven with white feathers. Jemmy had now twenty eggs, for which the senior gave him half a crown. "You will want two shillings in change," said he, "and I have no money." "Oh! never mind," said the senior, "I give you that as earnest of our bargain." They likewise left him plenty of bread and cheese, and gladness once more cheered his heart.

In the morning they returned with boughs, and had nearly completed the roof, when they heard a whistle, and several dogs of the pointer and spaniel breed appeared upon the heath.

The gamekeeper, mounted on a prancing horse, came galloping up, and seeing the new erection, asked "who had given them liberty to build there?"

Thompson, whose blood fermented with anger, as he recognised him for Jemmy's per-

secutor, replied, with more passion than prudence, "What is that to you?"

"I'll soon let you know that, you gipsey devil," replied he, dismounting, and tying his horse to a gorse bush. The lawyer, who felt as much as Thompson, but possessed superior prudence, perceived, from the keeper's appearance, that his friend, who was a diminutive man, was no match for him. He therefore came forward, and putting Thompson aside, thus addressed this merciless implement of power: "To challenge a man so much beneath you in point of strength, is the action of a coward, I shall therefore take his place; and that you may not have to allege, as an excuse, that I have given you no cause of offence, I now tell you, that if you are the man who shot poor Jemmy's dog, and were the instrument of pulling down his house, you are a greater brute than the horse you ride, and the pillory would be a gentle punishment for such a wretch."

The lawyer was a stout man, of most determined courage: this speech staggered the keeper, who after pausing a while, untied his horse, mounted, and rode away.

The roof was soon finished, and they had about half surrounded the building with a wall, in compliance with Jemmy's earnest desire, when they discovered a crowd advancing on foot, in the centre of which rode the keeper.

The labour ceased, and a consultation was held. That their approach indicated evil there was not the smallest doubt; that the keeper, baffled in his intent to bully, had rode away for a reinforcement, was readily conjectured, and so it proved. This mighty man advanced, with triumph in his look, exclaiming, "I deserve to be pillored, do I?—we shall see who deserves it most, you or I! —Constables, do your duty."

The principal officer, for there were eight, without attempting any violence, expostulated on the folly of resistance, at the same time observing, "that if there was no crime there would be no punishment; whatever the keeper had against them he must substantiate when they arrived at Ulverstone; in the mean time, he would protect them from injury, although a great concourse of the lower

classes were assembled, in consequence of the gamekeeper's report."

"Constables," replied the senior, "we have rendered a friendly action to an oppressed fellow-creature; is the world so depraved, that an act of humanity is cognizable by law?"

"God forbid," rejoined the constable, "the information is on the vagrant act, as gipseys, rogues, and vagabonds."

"Whatever is the charge, we shall not oppose the laws of our country, but cheerfully attend you; unconscious of wrong, we fear no investigation."

Leaving the working tools in possession of the farmer's labourers, they proceeded across the plain, the constables filled with astonishment at the language and deportment of the senior, so unlike any thing they had expected from the charge exhibited against them. The former spokesman then said, "You have nothing to fear on the score of prejudice or ignorance, the justice is a worthy man." "Aye," said another, "the rector is the poor man's friend."

The gamekeeper rode on before them, and at the end of the town had assembled a large mob of men, women, and children, to whom he related "what a wonderful escape he had had from a lawless gang of gipseys on the heath."

The minds of these ignorant people were so influenced by this crafty dissembler, that a volley of mud and stones welcomed our friends' arrival at Ulverstone, accompanied by the huzzas of ignorance and brutality. As they turned towards the market-hall, a fresh party of butchers, blacksmiths, and women, joined the former mob, and hearing they were gipseys, exclaimed against them, as rogues and pickpockets. The constables found it impossible to keep the peace, and were on the point of retiring to save themselves, when the attention of all parties was arrested by the discharge of a pistol, from the hand of a gentleman dressed in black, who had mounted a horse-block, to render himself conspicuous, and waving his hat to demand silence, spoke as follows :

"Fellow countrymen—fellow creatures—fellow Christians, listen to me. If you

love your liberties, your wives, your families; if you love your country, and respect its laws, listen to me, I say. I am prejudiced in favour of no one. I respect the good of all descriptions, whether they are rich or poor; more particularly, my friends, I feel myself attached to the latter, because when oppression stalks abroad, they need an advocate, to counterbalance want of money; a want that almost amounts to a crime, and in some cases subjects the injured party to punishment. On this principle, with all the powers of my body and mind, will I stand up for the poor." Here he was interrupted by loud huzzas, and "hear him, hear him," was repeated through the mob.

"I am a stranger here, and equally so to the cause of this tumult. I see persons in custody, but I know not their crime; do you?—I see by your looks you do not! From what cause then are they thus maltreated? Is it from being meanly habited and poor? or is it sufficient for you, that the mongrel hireling of a purse-proud tyrant tells you they are vagabonds, that you take the law into your own hands, and punish them ere they are found guilty? Allow them the same pri-

vilege you would wish yourselves in a similar situation. I love my country, and I respect its laws; do not you the same? I am sure you do. Let us not then act contrary to those laws, but let the officers of justice proceed in their duty, and leave their case to the decision of your worthy magistrate. What, let me ask you, will become of the interests of the poor, against the proud oppressor, if they support not one another? When it was asked in holy writ, "who is your neighbour?" it was justly answered, "not he alone who lives beside you—not he who is your relative—but he who stands in need of your assistance." Do these strangers come under that denomination? are they oppressed, and do they need your support? the answer is obvious; you have oppressed them, shew your contrition; give them your support, till you are assured they are unworthy of it; and, as the good Samaritan gave relief to the friendless stranger, go you and do likewise."

General and loud approbation followed this speech; but not satisfied with shouts that rent the air, they rushed in a body, seized the orator, and carried him in triumph to the hall of justice, followed by the prisoners.

But guess the astonishment, the joy of the latter, when in their advocate and able defender they beheld Camelford!!! their loved, long wished for Camelford!!!

Upon the bench sat a man of mild and venerable aspect, beloved by all ranks equally for his piety and justice; he was the father of his flock, and the universal friend of mankind. At his left hand, by way of contrast, sat the squire, hard and unfeeling in principle, cruel and litigious in practice. On a seat beneath appeared the magistrate's clerk, well versed in law, a ready penman, and by him, in familiar converse, sat Lillo.

The justice's clerk first examined the keeper.

Q. "Pray what is your name and occupation?"

A. "My name is Matthew Marksman, and I am gamekeeper to F. H. Esq.

Q. "Marksman! a very good name indeed! and pray, Mr. Marksman, what do you know of the culprits now in court?"

A. "Why sir, as I was hunting his honour's dogs over the heath, about six miles off, I saw a number of ill looking fellows patching up a house, and on a nearer view found they were gipseys. Naturally supposing this was meant as a receptacle for stolen goods, I coolly asked what they were doing, and who had given them leave? On which, one of them answered in the most impudent manner, what is that to you? I then jumped off my horse, determined, as I thought it my duty, to examine the place; when another sturdy fellow came up, and, without the least provocation, told me I ought to be put in the pillory. Finding myself a single man amidst such a lawless rabble, I did not think even my life safe, so rode off for the constables, and have brought them before your worship as rogues and vagabonds."

Q. "Upon my word, Mr. Marksman, you have acted a very patriotick part, and deserve well of your country. You did not give these people any provocation you say at that time or previous?"

A. "Not the least, I was civil and well behaved."

Q. "That is an answer to the precise point of time, but not previous; had you never interfered with, or provoked them before?"

A. "Never. This was our first meeting. I had heard indeed, that gipseys were in the neighbourhood, committing their usual depredations, but had not supposed it possible they would openly build a house to receive their plunder?"

Q. "And you know this to have been the design of the building?"

A. "Certainly! what other purpose could it answer?"

Q. "Very well observed. Pray with what intent did you go into that part of the country, when you made this wonderful discovery?"

A. "I went to hunt my master's dogs?"

Q. "You went to hunt your master's dogs! You went to hunt the gipseys too, it seems, but here I think you got upon a wrong scent.

Did this nefarious gang of freebooters never tax you with cruelty towards a poor idiot, towards Jemmy of the Wood?"

At this question, the squire rose from his seat, sat down again, bit his nails, coughed and shewed evident marks of uneasiness.

The Justice now spoke.

"Clerk, further interrogatories are useless. I grieve for the sake of humanity and the credit of the country that this disgraceful business has been brought before me. We are better informed perhaps than Mr. H. or his gamekeeper imagine. We know the whole scene of iniquity practised against a poor pitiable inoffensive fellow-creature; and have granted permission for these men who seem to have imbibed the milk of human kindness to erect the suspicious building on our own domain."

"You, Matthew Marksman, will pay two guineas into the court for the use of these honest men, as some remuneration for their lost

time. This the senior received, and appropriated to some necessary comforts for poor Jemmy. Camelford and Lillo, though they eagerly longed to embrace their friends, kept aloof for obvious reasons, after informing the senior they should be at the cave in the evening.

The squire had left the hall in a violent rage, at the conclusion of the rector's speech, and was haranguing some of his attendants in the market-place, and threatening vengeance, when Camelford passing by caught his attention. He rolled up to him with folded arms; "And who are you, Mr. Orator," said he, "who can expatiate so feelingly on my conduct? It is well for you, I could not get near enough, or I should have made you feel the weight of my whip, and brought you down from the exalted situation you had chosen."

Camelford affected astonishment, and starting back a few paces exclaimed, "Who are you that dare insult a stranger? I know you not, nor do I suffer such language with impunity."

“ I’ll tell you who I am—I am lord of the manor where that wretched fool lived.”

“ You may be lord of *manors* at a distance—you have none at hand, I am sure, except those of a blackguard.”

A mob had now collected; the word blackguard irritated the squire beyond all bounds, and he made a motion to kick Camelford, who catching his upraised leg threw him with some force upon his back. Though sorely bruised, he did not long lie prostrate, but jumping up, took off his coat, and stood in a posture of defiance. Camelford looked down upon him with a smile of contempt, and buttoned his coat tight around him. A ring was formed, rancour and passion deformed the countenance of the squire, coolness and intrepidity marked that of Camelford, who acted upon the defensive, till seeing a blow aimed with more than common force, he warded it off, and with his open hand, gave his opponent a slap on the cheek, which sent him reeling several yards, and made the market-place resound; at the same time admonishing him to desist, or he might repent the consequences.

This friendly caution was only fresh matter of irritation ; he returned to the attack with redoubled rage, made a feint with one hand, and with the other lent Camelford a blow on the breast, which would have brought an ordinary being to the ground ; but unmoved either in body or mind, and finding the squire determined to provoke his fate, he ran in, and breaking down every guard, struck him under the short ribs, and laid him a second time prostrate. The surrounding spectators inwardly rejoiced at the tyrant's fall ; not one moved to raise him but the gamekeeper ; whilst he was recovering his wind, Camelford again addressed him : " You may plainly see, and feel too I think, the power I possess ; I have, till provoked, avoided doing you an injury, but cannot answer for myself much longer ; either desist, or take what follows."

The squire had in some measure recovered his wind, and ere his opponent had well finished his warning speech, made a blow which Camelford avoided by stooping, and was in the act of returning it, when the gamekeeper, putting out his leg, tripped up his heels. This caused a general murmur, and the word shame ! was repeated from various quarters.

But this accident dismayed not Camelford, he recovered his legs in an instant; fully bent on bringing this business to an issue, he closed with his antagonist, and making use of an art he had learnt in his youth, placed his hands in a certain situation, gave the squire a complete somerset, and sent him with such force over a fish-woman's stall, that he lay without sensation; then turning to the keeper, with one blow sent him staggering to the left, and before he could recover himself, another on the right hand laid him prostrate; whilst Camelford stood over him, and with more than usual vehemence exclaimed, "*Remember Jemmy of the Wood.*"

The mob cheered our hero with loud and rapturous shouts, and would again have carried him off in triumph, but he declined in a peremptory, though civil tone, such a mark of their approbation, though they followed his footsteps till he took refuge at the inn, and joined his Fanny and Lillo.

In the evening, leaving their trunks at the inn, our friends set forward on foot to Furness Abbey, beguiling the way with cheerful remarks, and anticipations of future comfort.

The first view of the ruin filled Camelford and Fanny with wonder, mixed in the former with a gloomy kind of delight! The wide uninhabited valley, the stupendous grandeur of the abbey, whose towers and antique spires gave note of former fame and splendour—where the holies of the land bestowed absolution, bought with worldly pelf, or denounced anathemas on all of different creeds—where laymen bowed the knee, and obeyed the imperious mandate of lazy, slothful drones, whose pride and power kept ignorance in awe, and even appalled the learned and the great. This sacred fane, once the habitation of bloated pride and rank hypocrisy, was now the hospitable shelter of owls and bats, accompanied by the jackdaw, who, amidst the umbrageous foliage of the ivy, laid her eggs, nor feared the rude despoiler.

The twilight was fast advancing, a white owl skimmed around the building, and with her hootings welcomed their approach.

Lillo gave a shrill whistle, the usual signal, and, in a moment, the senior appeared before them—affection and feeling stopped their utterance—without speaking a word,

he took Fanny by the hand, cordially pressed it, and leading her forward, they found themselves in the cavern, surrounded by the whole party. Joy and congratulation here took place; they hailed the travellers with sincerity and delight. Thompson could not contain his transport within the bounds of moderation; his friendship for Camelford was tinged with enthusiasm, and called forth, at this moment, emotions the most fervid. The rest of the party received him with unfeigned satisfaction, and Camelford assured them, in return, that this was one of the happiest moments of his life; he then related every circumstance that had occurred since their separation, to their arrival at Kendal; from whence, continued he, "we posted to Ulverstone, and arrived at the critical moment of your appearance in the market-place." They, in return, were equally communicative, particularly dwelling upon their acquaintance with Jemmy of the Wood, and the turpitude of Squire H. and his gamekeeper, the leading facts of which Camelford had learnt at Ulverstone:

Having cut the bread of peace, and drank the cup of fellowship, Camelford produced

his pocket-book, and giving the senior two hundred and fifty pounds, desired it might be placed to the general stock. In the morning he was anxious to witness the completion of poor Jemmy's abode; for which purpose all the males set forward, each carrying something, to add to his comforts. On their arrival at the new-built hut, where they naturally expected to find Jemmy and his family, there was no visible trace of a living creature having been there. To the temporary hovel in the wood they next repaired; but Jemmy was not there; in vain they called—no responsive note of recognition reached their ears. The senior, who had witnessed, with friendly sympathy, the affection this outcast had shewn for his dog, walked towards the place of his interment, which the cackling of his poultry soon pointed out, and Camelford's warm heart throbbed with pleasure, at the thoughts of seeing and serving so oppressed and neglected a fellow-creature.

When they arrived within a few paces, they perceived the fowls were gathered round

Trim's grave, and thought the noise they at present made, differed materially from the usual mode adopted by their species. As our party approached, the feathered tribe gave way, when they first discovered poor Jemmy stretched at length upon the grave of his favourite. The senior called, but he moved not; he took his hand, but, alas! it was cold as clay. Jemmy had breathed his last!

Ye merciless minions of the unfeeling great!—edged tools in the hands of madmen!—learn from nature, in its half finished state, a lesson of feeling and humanity!

A scene so unexpected and truly affecting, sunk deep into the minds of all present. Camelford turned aside, to conceal his emotions—Thompson sobbed out, "Good God!" and the senior, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, uttered an inward groan, which spoke more than words could express.

After a little consultation, it was agreed to bury him immediately, with his faithful dog, in the very spot where lately stood his mud-built hut. This was soon accomplished,

and the senior carved, upon the bark of an over-hanging tree, the following couplet:—

“Beneath this turf, where once their hovel stood,
“Lie faithful Trim, and Jemmy of the Wood.”

The poultry were next to be disposed of. After feeding them with the bread, intended for their unfortunate master, they were easily caught, and conveyed to the farmer who had supplied men and tools to build the cottage on the plain, except old Peter, Jemmy's favourite; this the senior carried to the cave, as a pet for its female inhabitants. When Fanny heard the fatal conclusion of Jemmy's calamitous existence, she took the bird on her knee, and sprinkled his feathers with the tear of sensibility.

For some years, nothing of moment occurred, though we could spin out the history to volumes, were we to record all their acts of courage and philanthropy. The interests of *self* were totally set aside, when the poor, the oppressed, or the injured, came in contact. Fatigue or suffering were amply repaid, if one heart was relieved from woe, or one creature preserved in the great scale of existence. By their various disguises, they

were enabled to effect by *finesse*, what otherwise would have been impracticable; but this, as always tending to good, was perfectly honourable, and every way justifiable. They travelled their usual circuit, and made frequent excursions, of forty or fifty miles, in every direction. Our Americans made themselves completely acquainted with the history, politics, laws, arts, and manufactures, of this country; they studied agriculture and botany with success, and had an extensive collection of drawings, which embraced all the grand and sublime scenery, in which the North of England and Scotland abound. Their employments were useful to themselves, and beneficial to society at large. Exercise, health, and cheerfulness stamped their progress, unwearied in well-doing, and years passed on, unmarked by lassitude.

In the autumn of 1782, they took possession, for the last time, of the cavern at Furness Abbey. One day, as Camelford, Thompson, and Lillo, were perambulating the mountains, a strayed pointer dog, who, seemingly, had lost his master, came towards them, lay down at their feet, and wagged his tail; Camelford examined the collar, and a

flush of joy crimsoned his face, as he read;
' *S. W. Romney, Newby Bridge.*'

"My dear friends," said he, "congratulate me; this dog, I hope and believe, belongs to the very man who assisted me in my necessities at Carlisle, and the loss of whose address I have never ceased to regret. He bore the same name, though, as I recollect, his then residence was somewhere in Yorkshire. To-morrow I will be certified of the fact, and, if it prove so, will repay the money, with thanks and interest. At present we will take the dog to our cave, and he shall be my first introduction to Mr. Romney."

The next day Camelford supplied himself with the needful, and, accompanied by Lillo and the pointer, arrived at Newby Bridge. There was no occasion to inquire the residence of Romney; his dog "marshalled them the way;" but, first, it was thought necessary to make inquiry, for which purpose they stopped at a publick-house, within a few yards of the cottage, and there learnt that Mr. and Mrs. Romney had lived there only a few months; that they came out of Yorkshire,

but were gone to dine at a gentleman's house about three miles distant. The landlord then described the persons and manners of this couple, and fully convinced Camelford they were the people in the world he most wished to see. He went alone to the house, knocked at the door, but no one answered; he tried the latch, it was fast; he attempted the back-door with better success; it opened at his touch; but there was no living creature visible, except two cats, and the dog he had brought with him. The parlour was furnished with a piano, two violins, a shelf filled with books, two guns, as many fishing-rods, and every apparatus for writing. Camelford took advantage of the latter, wrote the epistle which has appeared in the first volume of this work; inclosed a twenty-pound bank-note, and placed it on the piano. This done, he returned to his companion, and they retraced their way to Furness, intending to pay Romney another visit, ere long.

The day following Camelford went to Ulverstone, to deposit a letter in the post-office for his friend in America. As he was advancing to the letter-box, a lady in a travelling dress, her face shaded by a green veil, was

approaching with the same intent, to whom he bowed and made way; but judge his astonishment, when, upon the fore-finger of her right hand, he beheld the identical ring that his mother wore at the time of her unhappy death, and which was a family ornament, the gift of his father—he could not be mistaken, it was of peculiar beauty and workmanship; his parent had mentioned it as an unique, and very often regretted its loss.

He staggered back some paces, but ere he recovered from the shock and surprise, the lady was gone. He ran to the head inn, and saw her, accompanied by another female, drive off in a post-chaise. What was to be done? To have a more exact view of the ring he was determined, and should it really be the same, to know how, and by what means the lady had it in possession. Eagerly inquiring where the chaise was gone, and being answered at Kendal, he hired a horse, bought a piece of black crape, to prevent his being known again, in case his conjectures were ill founded, and galloped off.

Camelford overtook the chaise in an unfrequented part of the road, put on his dis-

guise, and in a peremptory tone, ordered the postilion to stop. Then advancing, he said, "Ladies, be not alarmed, you have nothing to fear, I only request to examine a ring on that lady's finger; the application no doubt appears strange, and from a person of my appearance alarming, but I once more repeat, you have no serious cause for apprehension. I have doubts, I have a curiosity, that must be satisfied at all hazards." The lady, with a trembling hand, delivered the ring, which, on a minute examination, proved beyond all contradiction to have been his late father's, and, alas! his mother's also! He pressed it to his lips, and was going to make the intended inquiry, when the parson and Romney seized hold of his bridle. The impulse of the moment made him clap spurs to his horse, he broke from their hold, and was out of sight in a moment.

Camelford had scarcely proceeded a mile, when sober reflection returned. "To what purpose have I got possession of the ring, without the information attached to it?—have I not by my impetuosity tainted my character?—stigmatized my name by having it coupled with robbery?—Romney might have

been trusted!—he shall be trusted!—I'll return and make a full disclosure!"

During this mental soliloquy, Camelford's horse was quietly browsing on the cop; turning him round, he found, to his extreme mortification, that the animal was unable to proceed, owing to a sudden lameness in one of the fore-feet; dismounting to examine the cause, he could make no discovery, and with difficulty led her back to Ulverstone at a pace so slow, that had not Romney and the parson stopped to get refreshment, they must inevitably have overtaken him.

Camelford proceeded towards the cave, musing and melancholy. Possession of the ring had thrown him into a train of thinking that nearly bordered on distraction. The virtues and sufferings of his father rose with added poignancy to his remembrance; whilst the infamy and miserable death of his mother and her paramour, filled his mind with anguish more acute, than even at its first perpetration. Fanny anxiously inquired into the cause of his more than usual gloom, when he related to his friends the whole of his singular adventure. Each animadverted upon it,

but could draw no satisfactory conclusion, though they all agreed in blaming his precipitancy.

In his walks next day, which the melancholy tone of his mind induced him to take alone, he beheld at a distance two sportsmen, whom he easily recognized for Romney and his companion, and in the close of the evening, when they approached the abbey, rescued the former, as before related, and gave into his possession the ring, as a more probable place of safety than any his own desultory life afforded, where frequent change of habit and abode endangered its preservation.

The latter end of the following year, Camelford received a letter from his American correspondent, dated Bristol, at which place he had just arrived, and wished to see him.

Leaving Fanny to the care of his companions, in the cave of Ben Lomond, he joined his friend at Bristol, who with heart-felt pleasure told him, he was no longer under restraint, that America would soon receive him, as one of her favourite sons, that Fanny's father was dead, and had left her considerable

property, and that he hoped they would make it convenient to return with him.

It so happened, that the day before Camelford's arrival at Bristol, a French marquis left the Bush, on his return to the continent, and their persons so strongly resembled each other, that Camelford had been greeted by the title, on his first appearance, and not having made his name publick, was so designated all over the house, even after they discovered their error. This circumstance, and a wish still farther to puzzle me, was the cause of the address given to me at Worcester, and fully answered the perplexing purpose.

On Camelford's return to Scotland, he went to Newby Bridge, both from a wish to serve us, and to recover his ring; but learnt with surprise, that we had chosen a theatrical life, and were, they believed, at that time in one of the midland counties. Disappointed, but determined to see me ere he left the kingdom, he made the best of his way to Ben Lomond, and agreeably surprised his Fanny and friends, by the shortness of his absence.

After the communication of every particular relative to America, and congratulations on his emancipation from danger, Thompson and Lillo were delighted with the prospect of re-crossing the Atlantic, but the others drooped and saddened, when a separation was talked of: they seemed to have lost all memory of their former life, ere Camelford joined them, and fancied existence could scarcely be supported without him.

“ My friends,” replied Camelford, “ my feelings are no less acute than yours on this occasion, and my heart would be heavy indeed, but for its hopes that you will share our destiny; you have no local attachments in this country, our joint stock amounts to nearly 2000*l*. Fanny and myself shall be amply provided for, Thompson and Lillo have both respectable connections, and that sum, with your habits and dispositions, will enable you to take a farm in our vicinity, and live in comfort. I think you have some faith in my word, which I here pledge, that whatever happens, whilst I have the means, you my friends, my associates, my beloved companions, shall never want.”

Joy and gratitude pervaded every bosom, despair gave way to hope.

“ Hope, which springs eternal in the human breast,”

painted scenes of independence, and rustick felicity, in a country blest with every necessary requisite for the attainment of rational and domestick comfort. Little time was spent in preparation; Camelford, Fanny, Thompson, and Lillo, set forward immediately, wishing to see as much of England as the time would permit, with a promise from their friends of a meeting in six months at Bristol.

To diversify the scene, they took their route through Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire; made a partial tour of Wales, and thence to Bristol; where a Worcester paper informed Camelford of Romney's then residence.

Leaving Fanny at the inn, under the protection of her American friend, our trio took the road to Worcester, and arrived at the very crisis when my distresses were at their climax.

Their indefatigable endeavours to serve me, and final success, have been fully detailed in a former part of this work; we shall therefore leave Camelford for the present, and return to our own memoir.

CHAP. XVIII.

“ A CURE FOR THE HEART-ACHE.”

“ MORTON.”

“ The web of life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together.”

“ ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.”

OUR success at the pleasant town of Taunton, aided by Camelford’s bounty, rendered the time we passed there not only pleasant, but more comfortable than at any period within the last two years. Attention and civility flowed from every quarter, and except a few bickerings, which will arise in the best regulated societies, we had not the smallest cause for uneasiness.

Ann was indefatigable in her studies, she played three or four long parts every week, sometimes more, and gave general satisfaction. One instance of her retentiveness I

cannot omit. I much wished to perform my favourite part of Motley, in "Dead Alive," but the manager did not know where to procure a manuscript, (it was not then in print), my wife undertook it from memory, and made a complete copy, deviating scarcely a word from the original, and we performed it several nights with increasing applause.

Mrs. Hall, (wife to the travelling Crowdero), whose circumference was more than mortal could embrace, held the station of check-taker; the money was generally received by Mrs. Bridges, a lady formerly of some celebrity in the old school of acting, but now much advanced in years; nevertheless she would sometimes favour the town with songs which, twenty years before, were, I dare say; executed in a style above mediocrity; but now she quivered through the "*Soldier tired*" with a trembling voice and weakened powers, that set gravity at defiance, and *tired* the audience. Very laughable scenes would sometimes occur between the two females; the manager very considerably allowed them some refreshment during the hours they were employed in his service, but frequent disputes arose concerning the quality of the beverage

necessary; Mrs. Bridges chusing brandy as the greater stomachic, and the other preferring gin and bitters as the more powerful tonic. These latter points of delicacy were one night discussed in so audible a key, that the audience became a party concerned, and Davies, in the character of Hamlet's ghost, was obliged to interfere. Mrs. Hall, in high dudgeon, left her station, and squeezed herself into the pit, just before a Somersetshire farmer, who, it should seem, had never been in a theatre before.

The fifth act was just beginning, to which he paid the most profound attention; but as the bell tolled for Ophelia's funeral, the air on a sudden was saturated, not with the perfumes of the East, nor the sweet scent of the jessamine or the rose, but with an odour highly repulsive to the olfactory nerves, causing a contraction of the nasal organ in those unfortunately placed in the vicinity of Mrs. Hall. At that moment the corpse was brought forward with great solemnity, when the countryman, snuffing the fetid air, said, with much gravity and feeling, "I say, mistress, don't you think they've kept Madam Ophelia rather too long."

The transition, from the regularity of Worcester theatre to this temporary building in the Justiciary Hall, was very great. Though the audience was always respectable, and sometimes elegant, there were no boxes; a small pen, dignified with the title of orchestra, contained two vile fiddlers, and the travelling musician, who in times of need took a part on the stage. The bills were circulated by some of the inferior actors, who, on these occasions, are called *orators*, a title by no means applicable to any vocation they had talents to fill. The town *orator* had one shilling per day, and he whose happy lot it was to scour the country had two; frequent disputes arose respecting this latter privilege, one asserting his right to the country *orat*, and the other warmly claiming his turn, having taken the town *orat* two days together.

I had no idea till now, of the extreme uses one man may be put to on the stage. I had occasionally seen what is called a *double* at Newcastle; at Worcester they were not unfrequent; but that any individual could represent three or four parts in the same piece I had yet to learn; this, however, Manager Davies performed with the greatest ease; no

play could possibly be at a stand for want of numbers; he would double and treble, nay even take a fourth part; or if a scene interfered with the trifling alteration he thought necessary to make in his dress, it was very deliberately *cut out*, though perhaps the whole plot of the play hung upon it. In short, what to others would have been impossibilities, were to him not the slightest impediments.

One night he was strutting through the part of Castalio, to supply the place of a favourite actor, who had been suddenly indisposed, and was as usual very incorrect; but what he wanted in words was supplied by action, by starts, by crossings, and sawing the air. A pie-woman happened to come to the theatre this evening for the first time; Jonathan Davies, wantonly fond of a joke, directed her notice to the unfortunate manager, "who, he was sure," he said, "wanted some pies, and was at that moment beckoning her to him." We are easily led to believe what we wish, and just as Castalio was closing his grand soliloquy,

To his temptations lewdly she inclin'd,
And for a paltry apple——

she walked on the stage, and dropping a courtesy, said, "Do you want any pies, sir?" The disconcerted manager ran off, threatening vengeance, but the audience received more entertainment from this ludicrous circumstance, than any his acting could afford.

Manager Davies was a philosopher, in many respects resembling Tony Lebrun, though not so humourous; he laughed on all occasions. If there was a *thin* house, "a poor *domus*," he would say with a smile, "but we shall have a *bespeak* next week, and that will bring us through." If he had money, which was rarely the case, he laughed and lent it; if he had none, he laughed and did without it. If he was arrested, he laughed through the bars of his prison, he could have done no more in a palace. In short, he was the smiling philosopher; but he could not, as Shakespeare says, "smile and be a villain," for he was honest, tender-hearted, capable of friendship; and over a glass surrounded by his companions, would give a ludicrous account of sufferings that would have driven some minds to a state of distraction.

There lived at this time in Taunton a person of some property, who had lately filled the office of overseer with much credit and integrity; he was a remarkably nervous subject, and perhaps carried hypochondria further than any of his predecessors. He would keep the house for several weeks, under an idea of danger in going abroad. Sometimes he was a cat, seated on his hind quarters, and occasionally spitting at the person who brought him food; at others, he would fancy himself a tea-pot, and stand with one arm akimbo like the handle, and the other stretched out like the spout. But his last imaginary state was the most singular; he imagined himself dead, and would not be moved till the coffin came. Never having carried his "thick coming fancies" so far before, Mrs. ———, in serious alarm, sent for a surgeon, who addressed him with the usual salutation, "Mr. ———, how do you do this morning?"

"Do!" replied he in a low voice, "a pretty question to a dead man!"

"Dead, sir! what do you mean?"

“ Yes! I died last Wednesday, the coffin will be here presently, and I shall be buried to-morrow.”

The surgeon, a man of sense and skill, immediately thought of a scheme that promised success; with a serious, steady countenance he felt his pulse, and shaking his head, said, “ I find it is indeed too true! you are certainly defunct, the blood is in a state of stagnation, putrefaction is about to take place, and the sooner you are buried the better.”

The coffin arrived, he was carefully placed in it, and carried towards the church. The surgeon, perfectly acquainted with his character, knew where he was vulnerable, and acting accordingly, had given instruction to several neighbours how to proceed. The procession had scarcely moved a dozen yards, when a person stopped to inquire, who they were carrying to the grave? “ Mr. ———, our late worthy overseer.”

“ What! is the old rogue gone at last? a good release, for a greater villain never lived.”

The imaginary deceased no sooner heard this attack on his character, than he jumped up, and in a threatening posture said, "you lying scoundrel, if I was not dead, I'd make you suffer for what you say, but as it is, I am forced to submit." He then quietly lay down again; but ere they had proceeded half way to church, another party stopped the procession with the same inquiry, and added invective and abuse. This was more than our supposed corpse could bear; he was wrought up to a degree of frenzy, and jumping from the coffin, was in the act of following his defamers, when the whole party burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and so far abashed this valetudinarian, that, ashamed of the publick exposure, and awakened to a proper sense of his folly, he fought against the weakness, and in the end conquered it.

About this time Mr. and Mrs. Keys, whom I had left at Worcester, joined the company with their family, and proved a great acquisition. His children danced, he was a man of general utility, and Mrs. Keys very clever in broad comedy. The benefits came on, by which we netted thirty-seven

pounds, and were gratified by innumerable polite attentions, from the hospitable inhabitants of this charming town.

The manager proposed spending the summer months at Lyme Regis in Dorsetshire, but previous to the opening there was a vacant fortnight; and as the company in general could not afford to lie idle, even for so short a time, he fitted up a room at a small town called Chard, with very little prospect of success, and less of satisfaction; for as Taunton was, in most points of view, beneath Worcester, so much was this place inferior to Taunton, so that in taking two steps we had dropped to the very bottom of the profession. Still we murmured not, the manager laughed, and we joined him. Several of the company left Davies at Taunton, and amongst the new recruits was a Miss Stanley, a beautiful, well dressed, elegant girl, of no mean capacity, and with a vast fund of good nature.

The business was very indifferent at the opening, and daily declined from bad to worse; we were within two nights of our in-

tended departure, when an actor of reputed fame by accident arrived, and glad to catch even at the shadow of hope, Davies went in pursuit of him, and he was advertised next night for Sharp, in the Lying Valet, under the name of Mr. Hollycomb, just arrived from Dublin. But what was my surprise at beholding the very man whose distresses Tony Lebrun had relieved between Stone and Wolverhampton! the same individual Bardolph! the fiery meteor! rendered still more glowing, by additional fuel added to the flame. Nor was his costume at all improved, his appearance was wretched in the extreme. The house was as usual bad, and Hollycomb having run up a small bill at the inn, next morning ran away; and Davies laughing, made himself responsible, upon the whole, glad to be released from so much beggary and dissipation.

The inauspicious fortnight expired, and manager Davies was overwhelmed with debt. I had already lent him, at different times, twenty pounds of my small capital, and ten pounds more must be forthcoming, ere the landlord would suffer the scenery, &c. to

leave his premises; my purse was reduced to five pounds ten shillings, and his sole dependence rested upon me. But five pounds ten shillings could not, by any rule of arithmetick, pay ten pounds, and the landlord was governed by no other principle. If the scenery and wardrobe were incarcerated, a body of people must give over eating, and that was a prejudice of education of which no argument or system of philosophy could cure them.

If I had left this unfortunate concern, when we closed at Taunton, I had saved both my purse and reputation; but a something like gratitude attached me to this thoughtless mismanaging manager, and ere I was aware we were ingulphed in the vortex of poverty and disgrace. To make short of the ungrateful theme, I disbursed my five pounds, and left two trunks containing the greatest part of my wardrobe, as security for the remainder, the manager solemnly promising to redeem them the first week we opened the theatre at Lyme; this promise, however, was not fulfilled till several months afterwards, to our great loss, inconvenience and misery.

The only person who took a benefit at Chard, was the manager, but though he played his favourite part, and old mother Bridges sung, "the soldier tired," the audience were heartily tired of such mummery, and would not come.

We had twelve miles to travel, and my ten shillings comprised the whole stock of the company. Miss Stanley, and my wife, Warren, Dowton, Jonathan Davies, and myself, made a party to walk. We set off early in the afternoon, (meaning to take refreshment at Axminster, seven miles on our road,) followed by little Fan, and alternately carrying a cage containing four tame goldfinches. The day was remarkably fine, the party in high health and spirits; young, ardent, and thoughtless, we reflected not on the future, but grasped pleasure with an eager hand, whilst she was yet within our reach.

Arrived at Axminster, we entered the principal inn, where I ordered tea and coffee, and to wash down the dust by which we were nearly choked, added a bottle of cyder; the feathered prisoners were restored to

liberty, water was placed in the middle of the room, and after they had laved their limbs, their little throats swelled, in carols of thanksgiving.

The joke passed round, good humour was the order of the day, and Jonathan Davies swore, we were the most happy undone beings in the world. In the midst of our laugh the door was by accident left open, and one of my birds flew out, I followed and found him perched on the pipe of a decent looking man in the bar. "Sir," said he,—"I am as fond of pets as you are, and never without one about me," saying which, he opened his shirt bosom, and shewed me the head of a snake. Much surprised, and I confess a little alarmed, I retreated. "Don't fear," said he, "the creature is perfectly harmless;" placing it on the floor, it hissed round the room, and as he held out his hand, coiled itself upon it; then opening his bosom, it sprung in, apparently as to a place of choice.

I suppose my looks spoke surprise, for he continued, "you would scarcely perhaps have believed this without ocular demon-

stration. We are the children of prejudice, and brought up with an idea, that reptiles of this description are poisonous. You may rest assured of the contrary; I speak from experience, from the most accurate investigation; and I do not confine myself to this species of animal, but firmly believe that England is exempt from venomous creatures as much as Ireland, which is generally allowed to be so."

I did not at the time give full credit to this assertion, but from after experience am led to believe he was right. From conversation I have held with farmers, and other people, whose whole lives have passed in the country, I could never find a single instance, in their own immediate knowledge, where injury was sustained from the bite or sting of these animals, more than would have followed the bite of a cat, or the sting of a wasp, and any thing to the contrary I believe to be mere hearsay and prejudice.

When I returned to the parlour, I found a serious looking person in black, taking his tea at the other end of the room, who obser-

ving a set of people, whose whole property in current coin amounted to three shillings after the bill was paid, and who had no immediate prospect of procuring more, indulging in innocent mirth, condemned as irreligious and improper, a cheerfulness for which he had no relish, and was totally incapable of enjoying. At this moment, a blind fiddler, attended by his wife, and two almost naked children, struck up the college hornpipe. A chubby-faced brat held his hat, to collect halfpence; the few we had were distributed with cheerfulness and hearty goodwill, whilst the black looking gentleman shook his head, and observed, "what a load of sin the parents of those little reprobates have to answer for, who bring them up in the ways of Satan; but the foreknowledge of the Deity ordained it for wise purposes no doubt."

"True," replied Jonathan Davies, who delighted in controversy, "and if the Deity ordained it, how can it be wrong?"

"I see," replied the stranger, "the bible is a sealed book to you, by your drawing inferences from your own fallible intellect in

preference to holy truths. Do you think the foreknowledge of God did not see the evil end of your unseemly levity at this moment?"

"True again," said Jonathan, "and having foreseen it, had it been wrong, he never would have permitted it, being as powerful as just, and more merciful than either. The Deity likewise doubtless foreknew, that you would see a fellow-creature deprived of sight, with a wife and two helpless children, without putting forth your hand to relieve them, although you are a disciple of that great and liberal Master, who went about doing good. Your want of feeling is for a very wise purpose no doubt, though my *falible intellect* cannot find it out, and the *bible* is a book as much *sealed* to me, as your pocket and heart are sealed to the distresses of your fellow-creatures."

This *impious* doctrine had an instantaneous effect upon the disciple of Calvin; and the same persecuting spirit that filled the mind of his master, when he burnt Servetus, flashed from his eye, as he took his hat, and retired with a look of spiritual pride, meant

to freeze us children of perdition; but I believe he left as much contempt in the room, as he carried out of it.

The bill discharged, I had a surplus of three shillings, with which we began our last stage; but poor Fan, from age and bulk, was incapable of walking, in consequence of which we carried her in turn, and pursued our way with renovated spirits.

In the close of the evening, we entered the principal inn at Lyme. The dust and heat had not improved our original appearance; on the contrary, from the side glances of the waiter, when we ordered supper and beds, I suppose we looked rather queer; however he made a supercilious kind of bow, and said, "he would send his master."

Not conscious that any suspicion could attach to eight dusty pedestrians, we waited the master's arrival without apprehension, though a good deal mortified at the looks of the waiter.

The landlord attended our summons; and, in a very civil key, begged to know what we

would like for supper, at the same time saying, "his house was so full, he could only accommodate us with one bed;" this we appropriated to Ann and Miss Stanley, and made shift ourselves with sophas and chairs.

After breakfast I informed the landlord of our business in Lyme, and requested him to recommend some lodgings; this he did, and sent a boy with us to several, but alas! they were upon a scale of expense too enlarged for our finances. Dismissing the boy, we sauntered about the place, and in a little back street saw, in characters almost unintelligible, the following words pasted on a window, "*this ous to lette red dy ferniched.*"

"The very thing we want," said Dowton, "a house ready furnished; here we shall find an establishment at once."

The idea of a house! a furnished house! in our circumstances, was more than my power of face could bear with gravity. "A house!" said I, "a cottage! a hovel! the first floor of a barn! that would be more suitable to the narrow scale of our circumstances!"

An old woman, who was watching our movements, from the house opposite, now came forward. Dowton inquired the rent, and what number of beds? To our surprise and joy, she answered, "There were three beds, and the rent was twelve shillings per week." What began in joke, now appeared a matter of the first importance. Three beds would, upon a pinch, accommodate us, and twelve shillings per week, divided by five, would be more moderate than any thing we could possibly expect. We entered the premises, and closed the bargain instantly. To increase our satisfaction, there was a small quantity of coals, for which we were to pay four shillings at the end of the first week. A fire was lighted, and we commenced housekeeping with my three shillings. The inmates were, Mrs. R—— and myself, Miss Stanley, and Messrs. Warren and Dowton; Jonathan Davies procured a room in the neighbourhood. It was two hours past meridian, and hunger became oppressive. The exercise of the morning, joined to the sea breeze and change of air, were at woful enmity with my purse; its contents were swallowed up, in providing a single meal,

and that of the plainest kind; however, we eat our bread and cheese in thankfulness, and washed it down with a draught of excellent porter.

Leaving my companions, I strolled about in search of a pawnbroker; but so useful a personage was unknown in Lyme—the *three balls* were never even heard of. Wandering through some of the poor, narrow streets, I espied the cart containing the stage property, on the top were seated Mesdames Bridges and Hall, who, from a too frequent application to their favourite stomachic, seemed in evident danger of quitting their elevation. Not very anxious to be claimed as an acquaintance, I made a precipitate retreat, and took my course towards the sea, in a fit of melancholy despondency, meditating upon the past, and looking forward with little hope of the future. In all my distress, I had never hitherto wanted the common necessities of life; but now that idea was attended with a degree of horror so painful, that I sat on the beach, listening to the rolling surge, and comparing my once affluent and respectable state, to my present pennyless, friendless, and

degraded one. The beach was at this moment deserted, for the inhabitants were poor, and had few leisure intervals; the local visitors were in the height of gaiety and happiness seated round the dinner-table; and I who used to be first of the cheerful throng, was now—not without a house, but “without the means to support that house;” without the means of providing even another meal; and the theatre would not be ready to open for several days.

Walking with my arms folded, and my eyes fixed upon the sand, I inadvertently ran against somebody, and, looking up, discovered a servant in livery, whom I recognized as a domestick of Sir ———, from the neighbourhood of Worcester, with whom I had been in habits of intimacy, some months before, as far as theatrical chit-chat in the box lobby, and other occasional attentions. Humbled and ashamed, I was going to avoid him; but taking off his hat, he inquired, in a soft tone of voice, after my health, and added, “his master, who was just arrived, would, he was sure, be glad to see me.”

“Thomas,” said I, “times are strangely altered with me, since I had the honour of your master’s notice.”

“What, sir—money is not so plentiful, I suppose; these small towns are not so good as Worcester for plays.”

I then informed him, that so far from money being plentiful, I was literally without a shilling, and would be obliged if he could lend me one. The poor fellow shook his head, put his hand into his pocket, and, with the tear of sensibility in his eye, produced three pence halfpenny, as the whole of his worldly stock. This I would have refused, as, perhaps, inconvenient for him to part with, and would be of no essential service to me; but he pressed it upon me, and requested me, in tones of sympathy, to keep up my spirits—times would mend; then inquiring my residence, with a respectful bow, left me.

My sea-side reflections and adventure I kept to myself; Ann was, like the rest, a foe to melancholy, and as I had nothing, either pleasant or profitable, to impart, the com-

munication would answer no desirable purpose.

Six o'clock, our usual tea-hour, arrived; but, for the first time since I can remember, it passed by unnoticed. The cheerful rattle of the cups and saucers—the sociable bubble of the tea-kettle—the enlivening conversation that pleasant beverage never fails to produce—this day greeted not our ears.

The hours passed heavily with me till nine o'clock, though my companions had their occasional repartees; but no scheme occurred for “raising the wind,” as Jonathan Davies called it, and a gnawing pain at the stomach gave notice, that the supper-hour could not be passed over with that philosophy which marked the hour of six.

“I have not tasted food for three long days,” said Dowton, in a tragedy accent.

“Let us have no lying—it becomes none but tradesmen,” replied J. Davies.

“Is it for this I left my father’s shop?”

rejoined Warren, "Oh, that he were here, to write me down an ass!"

"To go, or not to go? that is the question! Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the pressing calls of hunger, or, by an effort end them?" This was said by Miss Stanley, but no one gave a reply. After a few minutes' silence, she suddenly rose, put on her bonnet and cloak, which were of the most fashionable kind, and sallied forth. We looked at each other. Dowton, whose partiality was apparent, became restless, and wondered where she was gone. Ann wished one of the party had attended her; it was late, and a young woman, in a strange place, was subject to insult. I felt uneasy; she had talked of an effort, to end our present wants! What effort a beautiful young creature could make, I trembled to think of. Every one gave his opinion, which ended in a determination to go in search of her. We were preparing to put our resolution in practice, when in walked the object of our inquietude. To our questions she gave no direct answer, but taking off her bonnet, sat down, as before. We were relapsing into melancholy,

when a thundering knock at the door awakened our attention; what could it be? Jonathan Davies answered the appeal, and in rushed two waiters—one laden with a tray containing a variety of eatables, the other carrying six bottles of porter, and two of wine! The crazy oak dining-table was drawn from the wall—the cloth laid—the dainties spread. The waiters bowed, “Any further commands to-night, Ma’am?”——“No! tell your master, I shall call upon him.” All this was the work of a moment; we gazed with amazement—no one uttered a word, and even after the waiters retired, we could scarcely persuade ourselves that such things were! The comfort of a good supper we were not prepared to expect, and, as a stranger, we made it welcome.

I dare say, there never were six people more truly happy; we enjoyed the present moment, without anticipating the future. “Take no thought for to-morrow, for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,” seems to be a maxim which predominantly governs the sons and daughters of Thespis. We were more anxious to hear by what means our caterer had provided the present entertainment, than troubled for the future.

After this truly comfortable and cheerful meal was over, she said—

“As one of the weaker vessels, I found my fortitude sinking under the painful necessity of going to bed supperless, especially as our meals, this day, have not been of a nature to overload the digestive faculties. A good supper is to me, at all times, a luxury, but this evening it was absolutely a necessary. With this impression strong upon my mind, I went to a strange hotel, marked in our morning’s progress, and desired the waiter to send a handsome, cold supper, for half-a-dozen, to my lodgings, with the necessary appendages of porter and wine. You see how it answered; there is plenty left for dinner to-morrow, and for breakfast we must shift as well as we can.”

Jonathan Davies promised to exercise his wits, to procure the morning’s repast, and we separated in perfect amity amongst ourselves, and in charity with all mankind.

CHAP. XIX.

"THE SCHOOL FOR ARROGANCE."

"The smallest worm will turn, being trodden."

"HENRY VI."

WE had scarcely assembled in the morning, when Jonathan Davies rushed into the house, crying out, "Tea and muffins for six, directly! towards which there are two *hog*, my masters, and all acquired by my knowledge in surgery. I bow with reverence to the first inventors of tooth-drawing; for, by extracting *one*, I shall be the means of giving employment to *many*—so to breakfast, my boys, with what appetites you may!"

The manager by some means procured a few pounds, which he distributed amongst the company, at the same time informing us, the theatre would be ready to open on Monday.

My worthy friend in worsted lace, who had generously lent me his all, called at my lodgings, and taking me aside, "Mr. Romney," said he, "I am sorry, very sorry to see you so low in the world; I wish I had our baronet's estate, I think I could do more good than he does. I have *incensed* him about you, and he desires to see you this afternoon, but don't expect he'll do any thing for you, for he has not a heart as big as a pea; now as I know you have seen better days, and mayhap when you had *sarvants* of your own, you *was* good to 'em, why the matter lies here. I have scraped together two guineas, and all I beg is, that you will borrow 'em of me; mind you me, I don't want to give 'em to you, I would not offend you for never so much: you may pay me again, when you can afford it, and whether that's ever, or never, is *not* of no consequence."

It is impossible to express my sensations during this kind-hearted creature's speech, they were a mixture of pride and gratitude. To be an object of pity to one in his situation, was the most humiliating attack my self-consequence had ever received; but the kindness, the generosity of his motive, conquered the

pride which almost choked me, and taking his hand, I expressed a grateful sense of the intended favour, but declined it as at present unnecessary. With difficulty I prevented his forcing the money into my hand, and not till I had promised to *borrow* it the week following in case the theatre should not open, would he relinquish his design.

In the afternoon, I had a strong conflict with myself, whether I should wait upon this great man; I knew he was what we emphatically denominate *a puppy*, but from his fondness for theatricals, he had always treated me with particular attention.

To make my bow as an object of charity to him, who a few months back thought it no degradation to be seen arm in arm with me, was a stinging reflection, and the design would have been relinquished altogether, had not manager Davies that moment appeared, who threw in such a torrent of eloquence in favour of the motion, that I conceded, though with an ill grace, till he wisely discovered, that perhaps the baronet wanted to *bespeak*, and that would give an *eclat* to the theatre, that must prove generally beneficial.

This observation had the desired effect, and I immediately waited upon Sir ———, whom I found stretched on the sofa with a pamphlet in his hand.

“ Ah! Romney! how do you do? what left Worcester in a hurry hey? you have not changed for the better Thomas says. Sorry to hear of your distress! I don’t go to plays in small towns, they are generally so execrably performed. There was a song you used to sing at our theatre with great effect, called ‘the Tailor done over,’ I sent for you to give me a copy.” Then ringing the bell, he ordered Thomas to bring writing materials.

Ready to burst with indignation, I was on the point of treating him with the contempt he deserved, when it struck me, that perhaps I was drawing hasty conclusions, that when I had gratified his puerile humour, by copying this foolish song, he might be prevailed upon to serve the general cause, if not myself individually; though surely no person of the least feeling would send for a man, animadvert on and commiserate his misfortunes, and then instead of endeavouring to alleviate them, ask for ‘the Tailor done over.’

After I had finished my task, he said, "Thank you, Romney! I hope times will mend! Good day! if you would like any refreshment, you will find your *friend* Thomas in the kitchen."

Swearing was a custom I always held in abhorrence, yet by no circumstance of my life was I so strongly tempted to pour forth execration; but utterance was choked, I gave him a look that discomposed the stupid placidity of his countenance, and supplied energy sufficient to raise him from his lounging place. I tore the song in pieces, flung it contemptuously towards him, and left the room in a state of mind bordering on distraction.

Davies waited in eager expectation for my return, and was actually drawing out a plan of the boxes which he had no doubt would be brilliantly filled.

"Well," said he, "will he bespeak? what plays does the baronet chuse?"

"'The School for Arrogance,'" replied I, "with the farce of 'The Tailor done over;'"

do you know any such? in short, he has played such a game with my feelings, that had I not been tied and bound by the chain of poverty and distress, I would have kicked him from one end of his apartment to the other." I then related the whole scene.

Davies, lifting up his hands and eyes, exclaimed, "Oh what a glorious opportunity is here lost by your folly! after such an introduction, to leave him without soliciting for a bespeak! had I been there, I would not only have written the song for him, but sung it into the bargain! you are not fit for the world, at least for the dependencies of it."

It was in vain to plead the wound my pride had received; poor Davies had no idea of any thing being called mean whereby money could be honestly obtained.

The theatre now opened, and owing to the influx of strangers, was decently filled every evening. The manager got money, and we were as comfortable as such a situation would allow.

About a month afterwards, a circumstance occurred which had nearly proved fatal to the success of our community. One Sunday evening, our little family, usually called "*the coterie*," taking an evening walk, were stopped by a crowd assembled round the door of a dissenting chapel, in which a man with Stentorian lungs was holding forth, who (in answer to my inquiry), they said, was called "*the hell-fire parson*." Curiosity urged us to enter, and in the pulpit we recognized the black looking gentleman, with whom Jonathan Davies had the contest at Axminster.

Soon after our entrance, he took his text from St. Paul, the words were, "I can do all things." He looked round for the space of half a minute, in pretended astonishment, and then exclaimed, "Impossible, brethren! No man can do all things! Paul, thou liest! I'll hold thee a guinea of it! but first let us read the context—'I can do all things through Christ!' Paul, thou art right! Here, indeed, I own I should have lost."

This was certainly a most eccentric opening. I recollect Sterne begins one of his

sermons, by denying his text, but to preface a serious discourse by laying a wager, savours more of novelty than morality.

We listened with attention to the noisy declamation of this cushion-thumper, and heard him consign three parts of mankind to eternal fire, through the merciful foreknowledge of the Deity.

Whether he recognized us, I cannot say, but he talked of a playhouse being the tabernacle of Beelzebub, the Devil's trap set with tempting meat, and that those who are wicked enough to taste it, were mentally poisoned to all eternity. At last diving deep into predestination, whilst the perspiration dropped from his chin, he asserted, that the evil one knew his own, even before they came into existence, and that there were children in the womb, like snakes in the shell, heirs of everlasting damnation."

At the conclusion of this sentence, Jonathan Davies rose up, we followed his example, and all left the chapel.

“Let us leave this place,” said he, “before it falls on our heads; I did not believe there existed a being, who would have the temerity to utter such blasphemous doctrine; what think you of the snakes in the shell?”

“Think,” replied I, “why I think his congregation are worse than he; the man is paid for preaching such certain doctrines as please their palates, and instead of the hell-fire parson, I think they should be called the hell-fire congregation.”

Our leaving the chapel before this terrible tormentor had finished his discourse was certainly highly indecorous; we should have endured him to the end, in compliment to the prejudices and feelings of his hearers; but from a general, and I am sure a generous impulse, we nearly rose at the same time, determined to hear no more of such diabolical nonsense. This great insult to the saints, elected before the beginning of time, was next day made cause of heavy complaint, and one of the elders was commissioned to lay an information before a magistrate, against the theatre.

Theatres at that time of day were not kept open by a licence, but only upon sufferance, or at the will of a magistrate. This gave the elder and his preacher great hopes, that by representing our behaviour to the justice, who was a minister of the established church, they should be able to get us removed. Accordingly, the next day Davies was summoned before the magistrate, and Jonathan went with him, as more capable of explaining the business. The clergyman, who presided on the bench, was in every sense of the word the reverse of the dissenting minister; he was *truly* pious, and the divine spirit of Christianity beamed in his countenance. He was punctual in all the duties of his function, firm in the belief of what he conceived to be truth, yet a staunch friend to liberty of conscience, and universal toleration; in short, he was an honour to his country and his calling.

When the manager appeared, he found his two accusers seated beside the magistrate, endeavouring to prejudice his mind against the players, by descanting on the free thinking opinions we had disseminated at Axminster, and our profane conduct at the chapel. When they had finished their charge, the

justice lamented the necessity he was under of closing the theatre; he was grieved to be the instrument of depriving any man, or set of men of a livelihood; but if he permitted the house of God to be violated, and the feelings of pious people to be thereby injured, he should be wanting in duty, both towards God and man. He then asked the manager if he had any thing to say, in opposition to the assertions of the complainants?

Jonathan now came forward, and with manly firmness addressed the bench. "Mr. Chairman, from the character you bear, as an enemy to every kind of persecution, I am sure, sir, you will allow, that subjects of the same king, born in the same country, professing the same religion, may be good members of society, although they differ in sentiment respecting forms and ceremonies; nor is it to the credit of any professor of Christianity, to stigmatize another with the title of free-thinker, because he cannot join in opinions which he thinks derogatory to the goodness and justice of his Creator."

He then recapitulated faithfully the conversation at Axminster, and the substance of

the sermon, including the snakes in the shell, &c. and finished by observing, “ that no honest servant could sit still, and hear the character of his beloved master insulted ; his generous indignation would rise, when a being noble, merciful, and humane, is represented as cruel, revengeful, and tyrannical, breathing nothing but premeditated misery on his servants. In this situation, sir, we felt ourselves, and can it be wondered that we left the place ?”

Whilst Jonathan was repeating the passage about the reprobate children in the womb, the worthy magistrate shook his head, in seeming detestation of such horrible doctrines, and at the conclusion replied,

“ Indeed I do not wonder at your leaving the chapel, I should have done the same. And as what you have stated appear to be facts, since these gentlemen do not oppose them, I see no good reason why I should gratify their spleen, by depriving you of your livelihood. When I find real cause of complaint, I shall exert the authority placed in my hands for the suppression of vice ; till then you have my free leave to pursue your

avocation." The preacher now rose, and was apparently preparing himself for a long speech, but he proceeded no farther than " St. Paul says," ere he was interrupted by the justice : " My good friend, I know what St. Paul says, I flatter myself, as well as you, or I have studied to little purpose. St. Paul says many good and excellent things, which, if calmly examined with a Christian-like spirit, will be found to abound with doctrines that do honour to his divine Master, and convey consolation to his creatures ; but I am sorry to say, the mistaken zeal of some professors, leads them to interpret his writings in a way by no means consistent with the attributes of the divine Being. I do not choose to enter into controversy, I wish every man to enjoy his opinions, as long as they do not militate against the laws of the country or the good of society." He now rose, and bowing to the company, left the room, as likewise did the manager and Jonathan, the disciple of Calvin following in much apparent chagrin, muttering something about Antichrist.

Thus ended this alarming business, the account of which Jonathan concluded by the following remark.

“Whatever fault fanatical dissenters may find with the established church, were the power placed in any other hands, we should, I fear, be ruled with an iron rod. What, for instance, would have been the consequence in our case to day, had the hell-fire preacher been substituted in the place of the reverend justice? why I’ll tell you, fire and faggot would have been the consequences had the laws permitted. I, for my own part, was bred a quaker; I revere that honest upright people, and at humble distance, reverence that virtue I cannot imitate; but so well am I acquainted with the various sectaries in this kingdom, that I am well convinced, toleration, and freedom of opinion, which are now enjoyed by all, would with difficulty be obtained, had they power to prevent it.”

CHAP. XX.

"THE GOOD-NATURED MAN."

GOLDSMITH.

"He hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks."

"SHAKESPEARE."

FROM this time the success of the theatre increased, the story of the fanatical opposition circulated through the rooms was of great service.

Mr. Ross (formerly the Edinburgh Roscius) was this season at Lyme, in a very infirm state of health; being a general favourite amongst the visitors, manager Davies applied to him, and he bespoke a play; what it was I cannot call to mind, but the farce will live in my remembrance, owing to a ludicrous circumstance attending it. It was "Three

Weeks after Marriage." Jonathan Davies undertook the part of Sir Charles, and Miss Stanley was quite at home in Lady Racket; having often played it with Mr. Dimond of Bath, whose *business* she wrote down for Jonathan's instruction; one thing she particularly desired him to introduce was, when they are parting after the first quarrel, she says, "Won't you go to bed?" he was to reply, "No, madam, I'll never go to bed with a woman who does not know *what's trumps*." I dare say, he had taken pains to be correct, but not at all easy in the part, and seeing the eyes of Mr. Ross intently fixed upon him from the stage-box, when the fatal question was put, "Come, Sir Charles, won't you go to bed?" he replied, "No madam, I'll never go to bed with a woman that *trumps*." The house was in a roar, Jonathan perceiving his mistake, made it worse, by bawling out, "Ladies and gentlemen, I did not mean any such thing, I meant trumps at cards—diamonds, spades, clubs, that is I——" and off the stage he ran, being with great difficulty persuaded to appear again that evening.

Though money flowed into the treasury, my boxes remained at Chard; week after week

Davies promised to send for them, but still they came not; he had so many old debts to discharge, that my wants were overlooked, or not thought urgent enough to demand immediate attention. One day whilst I was at rehearsal, a gentleman called at the theatre, and taking me aside said, “ Mr. Romney, I have seen your theatrical exertions with much pleasure, and wish to be your friend; be sincere, place confidence in me, and I will serve you, though to my own loss; how are you circumstanced? and how were you circumstanced when you left Worcester? Don’t be alarmed, you have nothing to fear from me; open your mind without reserve, and depend on my secrecy and assistance.” I confess I felt both surprised and agitated at this unexpected attack; how came this gentleman acquainted with my circumstances? what interest could he have in either serving or injuring me? He requested a confession that might be dangerous to make, and at the same time seemed inclined to be my friend. Seeing me pause, he continued: “ Mr. Romney, I perceive anxiety and doubt occupy your mind; take time to recover and collect your ideas; you shall dine with me at three o’clock, and then we can resume the subject; only

keep this in mind, I wish to be your friend, and to serve you to the utmost of my professional ability." He gave me his card, and I promised to wait upon him at the hour appointed. The moment he left me, manager Davies eagerly inquired, "how I got acquainted with so great a character?" "The acquaintance," I replied, "is yet to begin, this is our first interview." "Why, my dear boy, that gentleman is Mr. Ramsden, the rich attorney, I dare say he would bespeak a play, his heart is as capacious as his purse; 'tis said he expends at least a thousand a year in succouring those, who, by the chicanery and cupidity of his brother professors, are suffering under oppression and cruelty." The moment Davies said he was an attorney, the truth flashed upon my mind, the mystery was unfolded; my Worcester creditors had employed him, and this was the business in which he would serve me. When I informed Davies I was to dine with him that day, he replied, "Then you will see one of the greatest contrasts in nature, for his wife is the D—l. Haughty, ignorant, and unfeeling, she rules not only her servants, but her husband with a rod of iron, and has brought up her only child, a clumsy hoyden, to be her exact counterpart.

The amiable disposition of Mr. Ramsden, which is ill calculated to cope with a vixen, inclines him to yield in all domestick concerns to her violent guidance. Before you go, fortify your mind to bear with less irritability than you usually do, haughty looks, perhaps cruel expressions, for which the husband cannot be at all accountable, and over which he has no controul."

This salutary advice I strictly followed, and found the picture he had drawn was not in the least caricatured.

Exactly at three o'clock I knocked at the door of this respectable man's house. "He was not returned from the rooms—would I leave my name?"—"Romney, of the theatre." No sooner was 'theatre' out of my mouth, than a coarse, masculine voice, from the top of an elegant staircase, bawled out, "Aye, aye—one of Mr. Ramsden's foolish vagaries! He said, he had *axed* one of the players—shew him into the servants' hall—he'll be at home presently; and, do you hear, *ax* if he has brought any play-bills?" My mind was so well prepared for this uncouth reception, that I bore it with nearly as

much apathy as Davies himself would have done.

Declining, however, to cool my heels in the servants' hall, I walked into a garden, at the back of the house—the door of which stood invitingly open. I had scarcely entered, when a tall, bold-looking girl came from the house, and thus accosted me:—
“ *Ma'* wants to know if you have brought any play-bills? One of your company brings them every day; but I don't think you are he, because he is a fat fellow, and you are very thin—are you not well? for you look very white—may be, you want a lunch before dinner—*Pa'* says you are to dine here, and *Ma'* has been playing the *dickens* about it, and says, she won't come down stairs. Now, for my part, I see nothing in it, if so be, nobody knows nothing about it, and I have told the servants to tell nobody, for the world.”

Before I had time to reply to this vulgar rhapsody, Mr. Ramsden made his appearance, and his daughter left us, when cordially taking my hand, he said, “ My dear Mr. Romney, your good sense will, I hope, enable you to overlook the ignorance and folly

of the female part of my family. My wife's general conduct is so extremely repulsive, that half my time is taken up in making apologies, and healing the wounds her unfeeling ignorance inflicts on those she thinks beneath her. Very few men in my situation could, I believe, live with her; but she is my wife, Mr. Romney, and I hold that title so sacred, that I esteem it my duty to bear with her as well as I can."

The footman now informed us, dinner was served, and Mr. Ramsden led the way to a handsome dining parlour, where we found Miss, who informed her father, that "*Ma'* had ordered a side table to be laid, at which she meant to dine." Presently in bounced his wife, a robust, handsome, coarse, culinary-looking person, and seated herself at her own table, without the least notice of any one. Mr. Ramsden broke the silence, by inquiring if she would not take her seat as usual. Darting a furious look at him, she turned in her chair, exclaiming, "Mr. Ramsden, I am *putrified* at your behaviour! How low am I to be degraded? What a *situation* to reduce your lawful wife to! Who will you bring next, I wonder? A pretty pass things are

come to, if the rich and respectable family of Lawyer Ramsden is to be scandalized by any *riff-raff* company that *choses* to impose on his credulity ! I should not mind if you treated them in their proper *speer*—let them stuff and cram as much as they like in the kitchen; but to put your lawful wife, and daughter born in holy wedlock, on a par with strolling players, *mountebags*, or any vagabonds you can pick up, is what I neither can nor will bear.” At the conclusion of this gentle harangue, she burst into tears, which Mr. Ramsden noticed not; but calling for two glasses of wine, and smiling at me, said, “Come, Mr. Romney, here’s your wife and mine, and Heaven mend them !” I took my glass, but made no reply; not so the lady—she got up, and flew out of the room, exclaiming, “the devil mend you all !”

When the cloth was drawn, Miss departed, and the worthy man thus unbosomed himself:—“You have now, Mr. Romney, been an eyewitness of what I hinted at before dinner, and I thank you for the good sense you have shewn, in overlooking my wife’s vulgar ill-breeding. You observe the stress she lays on ‘*lawful wife*,’ and ‘*daugh-*

ter *born in wedlock*;' the reason of this is, I have what is called a natural daughter, as much superior, in every personal and mental accomplishment, to the piece of legitimacy you saw at dinner, as it is possible to conceive. I am fond of her, almost to distraction; my wife knows it, and, although she was born prior to my marriage, is a constant object of reproach. But we will, if you please, enter upon the subject which brought me to the theatre this morning." He then put into my hand a letter, which, I soon found, came from my principal creditor at Worcester, who had traced me by means of the supercilious baronet, whom I had offended by my (I think proper) behaviour, concerning the silly song of '*The Tailor done over*.'

This letter empowered Mr. Ramsden to arrest me for one hundred pounds. My feelings may easily be conceived. My kind host entered at once into the spirit of them, and, with the smile of benevolence, said, "My good friend, keep up your courage; as I told you before, you have nothing to fear from me, and I think it a fortunate circumstance that they have employed me,

in preference to others, who would, perhaps, have been less delicate. My correspondent at Worcester will expect an immediate answer, which I shall delay as long as possible, that you may have time to arrange matters; for, though I shall decline the business, others may take it in hand; therefore my advice is, that you move your residence as soon as possible, and as this will be attended with expense, suppose you have a benefit—towards the success of which I will exert all my interest.”

The severe buffets of adverse fortune—the *hauteur* of the purse-proud—the sneers of the ignorant, have many times wrung my heart, yet never moistened my eye; but the kindness—the benevolence of this *legal phenomenon* set the muscles of my face in motion, and I turned aside, to hide the falling tear. Observing my emotion — “Come, come,” continued this good man, “let us finish the bottle, in drinking success to your benefit; though but a young man, I fancy your passage through life has been rather eventful—indeed I have been told as much—and if it would not have too much the appearance of curiosity, I should be glad to

learn the particulars of your former mode of life."

Happy in any opportunity of shewing my gratitude, I recited most of the foregoing circumstances, with the exception of what related to Camelford; his history was a sacred trust, which every tie of obligation and friendship bound me to regard.

At the conclusion of my narrative, he said, "You have indeed experienced a great reverse of fortune, but in the midst of all your misery, you have had a consolation I am bereft of, namely, the sympathising affection of an amiable partner, to whom you could confide all your joys and sorrows, and one who, by your own account, has alike shared in your prosperity, and soothed you in the hour of affliction. It appears surprising that, in the midst of all your difficulties, you never applied to your relations in Hampshire; the high sphere of respectability in which they move, and your greatly favourable account of the head of that family, give a fair ground for hope to build on, at least, I think there could be no offence in the application." "The family you speak of have not the slight-

est knowledge of me, they scarcely know such a person exists; Sir Thomas——, my worthy and respectable guardian, is dead; the present Sir William is a stranger both to me and my affinity, nor do I think myself authorized in such an application, merely because the current that runs through his veins, happens to be the same that flows through mine.”

“Well, sir, you must be the best judge of your own feelings, my advice was the mere impromptu of the moment;” then rising, he took from a handsome bookcase an elegant edition of Shakespeare, of which he begged my acceptance, “They will serve you in your profession, and sometimes remind you of a friend at Lyme.” I was beginning to express my acknowledgements, but he interrupted me: “Not a word, the books shall be sent to your lodging; in the first page of the first volume you will find, beautifully engraved, the name of a friend I usually employ in the service of those I think worthy, and whose efforts are generally crowned with success; you have but a slight knowledge of him at present, but I hope you will become better acquainted.”

When I rose to depart, he shook me by the hand, “Romney, bestir yourself about

your benefit, for I apprehend your residence here will not be safe for more than a week; and as I have some interest in the town, and at the rooms, you may, if you please, say by my desire; for I am sure it is my desire that you may have a good house."

Soon after my arrival at home the books were brought, and examining the first page of the first volume, I found Abraham Newland's name to a bank-note of five pounds.

If any thing could have heightened my reverence for this truly superior man, this action, so replete with feeling and delicacy, would have done it. Why have not the rich always extended hearts? The answer is obvious, prosperity destroys the social virtues, feeling is sacrificed at the shrine of ambition, and interest swallows up the softer affections.

The manager called to know the result of my visit, and his first words were, "Will he *bespeak*?" When informed of my perilous situation, he sympathized with me, I believe, sincerely, and though taking a benefit in the height of the season, would be to him a certain loss, he cheerfully forwarded it with all his power. Poor Davies! he was a truly

single-hearted character, and though not endowed with talents to render him a shining ornament to society, he was, according to Pope, "the noblest work of God—an honest man!"

The pieces fixed upon for my benefit were "The Jealous Wife," and "The Taming of the Shrew;" which gave such offence to Mrs. Ramsden, that she would not attend the theatre, though a box had been put down in her name. The emoluments of the night more than answered my most sanguine expectations, and, after discharging all my trifling debts, I found a surplus of twenty pounds!—a sum of money, which I almost despaired of ever again possessing.

My first step was, to get my trunks from Chard, which, besides the most valuable part of our wardrobe, contained Camelford's address. This had been a matter of great concern; to be suspected of neglect or ingratitude, by so worthy a friend, was grievous to minds filled with love for his person, and admiration of his talents.

The only company of comedians, within any reasonable distance, was at Swansea, a

small sea-port in Wales. To the manager (Mr. Masterman) I wrote, and received an immediate answer, with an engagement at fifteen shillings per week, each. I also wrote to Camelford, faithfully describing every thing that had befallen us, giving my address, '*Theatre, Swansea.*' Preparations were made for our departure, which, as the day approached, threw a gloom over the countenance even of Ann my wife, whose natural cheerfulness, and flow of animal spirits, seldom suffered depression, even under misfortunes that drove me to despair. The formation of the mind differs as much as that of the body; a person of an irritable, nervous habit will sink under the load, that a sanguine disposition will scarcely conceive to be an evil.

My regret at leaving the company, though evidently advantageous in a pecuniary point of view, was sincere; fellow-labourers in misfortune, their welfare, as a body, was dear to me. The evening previous to my departure, we spent together at the same inn whence Miss Stanley had so dextrously provided a supper, on our first arrival at Lyme.

As the most economical and convenient conveyance to Swansea was by sea, I took our passage in a fishing-smack, to sail early the next morning. In the mean time, I called upon the worthy attorney, and was directed to the house of his *natural* daughter, who, amiable, accomplished, and beautiful, was seldom noticed by the inhabitants, whilst the *unnatural* daughter, vulgar, plain, and ignorant, was admitted into all the fashionable assemblies. After I had been introduced, this sweet girl said, "I am sorry, Mr. Romney, you are going to leave us. Permit me to say, the theatre will lose much of its attraction; but, as my father informs me, imperious necessity takes you from us, I have only to add my good wishes to those of this best of men." Mr. Ramsden, whilst the tear of paternal affection beamed in his eye, said, "Mr. Romney, in comparing our comforts at dinner, the other day, I forgot my greatest; this dear girl amply compensates for all my domestick misery."

I informed him of my intended voyage to Swansea on the morrow, which he much approved, and insisted on providing sea-store, observing, with a smile, "that I was a

fresh-water sailor, consequently unacquainted with these matters, and that he would lay in the needful at less expense, and with less trouble." I bowed assent, but requested the bill might be sent to my lodgings early in the evening for payment, as we should set off by the morning's tide. He promised, every thing should be settled to my wish, and I took a grateful and final leave of this truly good man. If he be still in existence, and should chance to read these Memoirs, he will see the effusions of a grateful mind, that, I trust, never did, nor ever will forget the abundant favours received at his hands.

As I sat at supper with my theatrical friends, the bill of parcels was put into my hand, couched in the following terms:—

1 Ham	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
2 Tongues	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
1 Doz. French bread					0	0	0
1 Pot butter	.	-	-		0	0	0
6 Bottles port	-	-	-		0	0	0
6 Ditto sherry	-	-	-		0	0	0
1 Doz. porter	-	-	-		0	0	0
					<hr/>		
					0	0	0
					<hr/>		

"Accept these trifles, with the best wishes of
"T. RAMSDEN."

The farewell treat over, my companions retired, unacquainted with my intention to depart on the morrow. Leave-taking has always been my aversion—it answers no one good purpose; on the contrary, it unsettles and softens the mind, at a time when the greatest strength and fortitude are necessary.

Left to my meditations, I passed a melancholy half-hour in reflecting on the instability of human affairs—on the instability peculiar to a theatrical career. We have scarcely formed a little society, either amongst ourselves, or with the inhabitants of the towns we visit, ere some chance dissolves the one, and the common routine of travelling the other. Absence destroys the attachment—fresh friendships are formed, and thus we go on from year to year, unsettled in mind as in person. Yet the life of an *Itinerant* is not without its charms or usefulness—we see the world, and, by study and observation, acquire a greater knowledge of men and manners, than twice the number of years would give to a person tied to one situation.

At the conclusion of my reverie, I wrote the following letter, to be delivered at the theatre after my departure:—

“Brothers in exile, and co-mates in distress, pardon my abrupt departure; I could not summon resolution to say, *Farewell!*—‘it stuck in my throat.’ May your old friend’s best wishes attend you all, through every *act* of life’s *tragedy!* and may Providence, in the *last scene*, give the word of comfort to *imperfect* human nature, when the *curtain* of calamity shall *fall* to *rise* no more.

“S. W. R.”

CHAP. XXI.

"THE TEMPEST."

"SHAKSPEARE."

"Where we lay, the chimneys were blown down."

MACBETH.

AT three o'clock in the morning we bade adieu to Lyme Regis. The vessel, for so long a voyage, was small to a terrifying degree; in fact, it was an open boat. The captain had agreed to land us at Swansea for half-a-guinea. The wind was fair, and we proceeded rapidly on our way, passed Sidmouth, Exmouth, Torbay, and Dartmouth, and were proceeding towards the Land's End, when the wind chopped about so suddenly, that the boat nearly upset, at the same time a wave broke over her, and left us to the mid-leg in water; in this situation we were driven back almost to

Portland Island, and saw very little chance of reaching Swansea that day. The voyage thus unavoidably lengthened, our superfluity of sea-store proved very acceptable, nay, even necessary; we made very little way, continually tacking, and beating about till the approach of evening. Wet to the skin, and up to the knees in water, with a certainty of passing the night in that situation, were enough to daunt the stoutest of us—what, then, must be the sensations of a female? But Ann's valuable spirits did not even then forsake her; she not only encouraged me, but the whole crew. One instance of presence of mind is worthy record. In the middle of the night the sailors fancied they saw land; at the same moment the man at the lead cried out, "*About! about!* or we are lost." I felt Ann put something in my hand, saying, "Take this; if we are cast away, you will stand a better chance than I shall, and it may be of service." It was the purse, containing our all, and Camelford's ring. Never, never, shall I forget my then sensations—almost certain of immediate destruction, I took her in my arms, and exclaimed, "Please God we will die together!" An immediate *tack*, however,

saved us, but, at the same time, threw me with such force against the gunnel of the boat, that I dropped the purse at my feet. The water was too deep to search for it then, with any chance of success, and the ring would, in all probability, be crushed by the feet of the sailors.

We once more drove out into the wide ocean; but the dawn gave us a view of land, which, on a nearer approach, was ascertained to be the Welsh coast, and, about eight o'clock we landed at Swansea, nearly exhausted with fatigue, cold, and watchfulness. After a considerable search, the purse was found by a sailor, who, during the greatest part of the night, had been singing hymns, or reprimanding his companions for swearing.

The comforts of a neat inn, made doubly comfortable by the sad reverse we had just experienced, gave me a flow of spirits that, I determined, should be felt by all around. The crew were regaled in the kitchen with warm flip, and as I thought a reward due to the honest Methodist, who had found my purse, I sent for him into the parlour.

“ My friend, you must accept this half-guinea.”

“ I won't take it, sir.”

“ Why not ?”

“ Because I only did my duty—I have a comfort in the reflection, of which your half-guinea would rob me.”

“ This is a singular mode of thinking—where did you learn it ?”

“ In the gospel—‘ *Do as you would be done unto.*’ He then left me full of wonder and admiration.

It is an observation amongst foreigners, “ that the comfort and convenience of travelling in England, are luxuries unknown in other countries.” Certainly a good inn is a most desirable thing; for my part I agree with the late respectable Lady Jane S——, who once said to me, “ Mr. Romney, I am never so happy as at an inn.” If a person who abounded in all the good things of this world, an immense property, a luxurious home, a

splendid establishment, could delight in the comparative comforts of an inn, what must have been our feelings, after buffeting the rudest of elements the whole night, to find ourselves seated in a neat parlour, a plentiful bill of fare, garnished with civility, good appetites, and money in our purses? In short, I was beyond expectation happy, the past was forgotten, the present I determined to enjoy, and leave the future to the direction of that kind Providence, who though we too often murmur at his decrees, will, on a retrospect, be found to have dealt by us much better than we deserve.

A few hours' repose restored my wife and poor Fan to the dinner table, uninjured in health, and renewed in bodily strength. The manager spent a couple of hours with us, and I found him apparently, exactly what I expected, a plain, honest man, with a degree of candour and sincerity about him, not often met with in the managerial circle; an opposite line of conduct is found to be more beneficial, and by some, thought absolutely necessary. Mr. Masterman appeared to be fully in possession of my unfortunate management at Worcester, Gloucester, &c. which

was easily accounted for, when I understood my old friend Tony Lebrun was a member of the company. Eagerly inquiring where he was to be found, "I think," replied Masterman, taking out his watch, "this is about the time he usually takes his *drops*, as he calls it; if Mrs. Romney will excuse us, I will conduct you to the place." We pursued our way through several alleys, and at length dived into a small entry at the end of which we entered a pot-house, crowded with Welsh people, who, in their native language, gabbled like ducks in a pond. In the chimney corner sat a blind harper, playing, in the true Cambrian style, "of a noble race was Shenkin," and by his side I discovered a long pipe, a cocked hat, and a ruby nose; these I knew must belong to Tony, who, the moment Masterman entered the room, cried out, "Od rabbit it! manager, these philosophers are solving one of Euclid's problems." "And pray do you understand them, Mr. Lebrun?" "Perhaps as well as I should any other philosophers on the same subject." Just then, he discovered me, and dashing his pipe on the floor, seized my hand, and jumped about like a maniac, "Od rabbit it! we heard you had joined some American outlaws at Bristol, but

I knew it was all a lie. *Sitteradoche*? my dear fellow, that's Welsh for how do you do; and how is the little darling? not forgetting the bow wow."

Being play night, the manager soon left us, and we retired to a private room, where Tony fully informed me of his adventures since we parted.

"Let me see, you left us at Worcester, and 'twas well you did, or *quod* would have been the word. Besides the Worcester people are quite altered—such an undiscerning audience! would you think it, my dear friend, after playing all my *tip tops*, such as Hardcastle, Doiley, the Grave-diggers, first and second, which I can *do* with any man in the kingdom, they had the blindness to prefer old Edwin, who only played for a few nights, and when my *ben* came on, it was all *my eye*; a *paper house*—a *meeting of creditors*—so I left them to make a *dividend*, and came away with my wardrobe in my pocket handkerchief, a short stick in my hand, and the first volume of Sterne's Sentimental Journey in my pocket. With these, I set forward on a pedestrian tour. As I came through a small village

near Hereford, I observed a crowd of people in high glee, surrounding a mountebank stage, on which a Merry-Andrew was performing various tricks and fancies. You know my way is to seize mirth wherever I find it, so I seated myself on a stone bench at the door of a public-house opposite, and as it was about the hour I generally take my *drops*, I called for my *quantum*, and whilst I smoked my pipe in comfort, though reduced to my last shilling, joined in the laugh, for really the fellow was very whimsical. But guess my surprise, when the doctor came forward, at beholding my old friend *manager Horton*, to whom I introduced you at Stone. "Tony," said I to myself, "thou art in luck! the doctor is in full practice, he must prescribe for *thee*, surely he'll *stand a quid*." Dressed in a scarlet coat, laced waistcoat, and ruffled to his finger's end, he alarmed the *natives*, and they threw up their handkerchiefs, (each inclosing a shilling) by hundreds. The prize that day, was a breeding sow, and six little pigs; I had but one shilling left, but the doctor was my friend, and he had many, so od rabbit it! thinks I, I'll try my fortune. Still there required some management, the only handkerchief I possessed contained my wardrobe;

however, once set upon the thing, I was not to be baulked with trifles; so slipping behind the house, I drew off one of my boots, robbed my leg of its stocking, and placing my shilling in the foot, wrapped it up with a small scrap of paper on which I wrote "*Tony Lebrun's last shift.*" I threw it up, and saw the doctor open it; when he had perused the note, he cast a scrutinizing glance amongst the mob, but not descrying me, he was on the point of retiring, when luckily he cast his eye towards the publick-house, and as I have not an every day appearance you know, he recognized me with a gracious bow, which I as magnificently returned. The sport went on, the Merry-Andrew ate fire, balanced coach-wheels, and danced the rope; at length the awful moment arrived; handkerchiefs were claimed with eagerness, but, to the disappointment of the owners, contained nothing but powders, pills and drops; at last, the elegant covering that contained *my* deposit, made its appearance; the owner was called for, and *Od rabbit it*, Mr. Romney, if I was not ashamed to own it, hang me up like a dog! however, the third time I came forward, and put in my claim; think-

ing to shew a degree of calm indifference, I did not examine the contents, but put the stocking in my pocket and returned to my pipe; for as all the handkerchiefs I had seen opened, contained pills and powders, and as I valued not such trash, I felt little curiosity.

“ The sport over, the winner of the prize was desired to come forward, but nobody answered; *Od rabbit it*, thinks I, let's have a peep, who knows but this may prove my lucky day! slowly unfolding the cotton covering of my leg, I found a scrap of paper, on which was written the following elegant couplet:

“ This here is one of Fortune's *rigs*,
Come up my friend, and claim the pigs.”

“ *Od rabbit it*, you might have knocked me down with a straw! I was so pleased, and at the same time so perplexed, for what could I do with pigs?—how dispose of them?—where put them? An actor of my merit, who had had the honour to perform in most of the theatres royal in the kingdom, turned swine-herd! however I determined to claim my

prize, let the consequence be what it would ; so up I mounted, and had no sooner made my exalted and first appearance on that stage, than I was greeted with a general huzza ! and though I am not easily put out of countenance, this was more than my modesty could well stand. The doctor now harangued the mob.—“ Ladies and *gemmen*, all’s fair and above board, do ye see, none of your *canu-vering* ; every *gemman* that *vins* a prize receives it there and then ;” thus saying, he opened a pen, and out came six young pigs, and the old fat sow. “ This here little *gemman* in the cocked hat, who is the owner of that there prize, has only to pay Mr. Merryman a shilling, and he may drive his hogs to another market.” “ Here was an incident, Mr. Romney ; I could as soon pay the national debt as another shilling, and my driving the pigs would have been a pretty exhibition for the *natives*. I gave the doctor to understand the state of my finances, when with wonderful quickness he turned from me, and holding up a guinea, “ Mr. Merryman, the *gemman vants change*.” “ That is,” replied the clown, “ he *vants* twenty *hog* before he can drive off his pigs.” When the change was procured, he counted it into my hand,

but with astonishing dexterity, and unperceived by the crowd, smuggled them into his own pocket, which I of course countenanced, by pretending to put them into mine. The mob dispersed, we adjourned to the public-house, and charging our pipes, “Mr. Lebrun,” said the doctor—here Tony was interrupted by the entrance of a man about five and twenty years of age, sallow and cadaverous; his long black hair, filthy and matted, no linen, and scarcely any covering but a ragged waistcoat and small clothes. With an eye expressive of deep dejection, he looked round, and heaving a sigh, pronounced, with much pathos, “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” He then turned upon his heel, and retired.

Tony, observing my surprise, informed me “he was perfectly harmless, and particularly fond of musick; wherever the harper is, there poor mad Tom is to be found.”

“Good heaven! Tony, is this poor maniac of so little consequence in the scale of existence? has he no friends to clean and clothe him? robbed of nature’s greatest blessing, *reason*, he ought particularly to be pro-

vided in the articles of food and raiment, instead of which, he appears oppressed with famine, and liable to perish from neglect, and lack of covering. This is not the first time I have experienced this great proof of human depravity. In various country towns, idiots are turned loose on the publick, and neglected by those who ought to watch over them, they ramble about almost in a state of nudity, are constantly subject to the wanton cruelty of ill-taught boys, and sleep under the hospitable shade of an hedge or an haystack."

"*Od rabbit it*, Mr. Romney, you think too deeply; I formerly was weak enough to do the same; but a constant intercourse with men and manners has so strengthened my mind, as some people would call it, or in more proper terms, has so seared and hardened my feelings, that neither the cruelty of one part of mankind, nor the sufferings of the other, make that impression they once did. I am often astonished at my own depravity; but do let me go on with my story, I shall soon have finished, and then we will go to the play. Let me see—where did I leave off? Oh! we were at the publick-house.

‘ My dear Mr. Lebrun,’ said the doctor, shaking me again by the hand, ‘ this is a lucky meeting, you are the man above all other, d’ye see, I have long *wished* for, and if you are disengaged, I can give you a *sittiation* ten times as *lucartive* as that there play-house.’ “ *Od rabbit it*, that’s just the thing, I want to get money honestly, the stage is but a poor livelihood, and though I am now manager of a company of pigs, that will in all probability make me a decent *ben*, I am at present, what is vulgarly called *stiver cramped*.”

“ Say no more, my dear boy, you shan’t *want* the *corianders* whilst you stay *vith* me.’ The bargain was concluded over a quart of eight-penny, and I was to receive two guineas a week, and a guinea in hand. “ Now, doctor, what am I to do in this business? I won’t be your *Jackpudding*, and what other department can you give me?”

“ Oh!” said the doctor, winking his eye, and speaking in a low voice, “ you are to be my *Chum*.”

“ Your *Chum*! Explain.”

“ Only the same business over again ; I attend another *willage* to-morrow, whither my man is gone with the stage, and *them there* pigs ; you must throw up your shilling as you did before, and *win* the sow again.”

“ What ! my own pigs, doctor ?”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! friend Tony, you are *had* ; do you think any prize *worth* having is ever carried *away* from our stage ? No, no, *ve* have *always* a *chum* for *them there* things, and if you had not come quite in the *nick*, *vy ve* must have got somebody else.”

“ Here was a precious business ! after winning the herd of swine, and getting a place at two guineas a week, I was to be *chumed* out of one, and I disdained to accept the other ; for though I would do any thing for an honest penny, Mr. Romney, I am no swindler. The doctor was gone to look after his horse, and as I found there was nothing to be expected from him on honest principles, I scorned to keep even the guinea he had given me ; so folding it up in a piece of paper, I wrote on the cover,

Sir doctor, I own, I'm not up to your *rig*,
And therefore, d'ye see, I shall now *hop* the *twig*,
For honest I came, and honest I'll go,
So good master doctor, farewell, D. I. O.

and leaving it on the table, made the best of my way to Hereford, where I knew my friend W—— had opened his theatrical campaign.

“As I entered the town, I saw by the *posters* that *Hamlet* was to be performed that evening; and as it was nearly seven o'clock, I made my way directly to the theatre. The actors rejoiced to see me; the manager swore “the sight of me revived the *cockles* of his *heart*, like a glass of *gin* on a *frosty morning*,” then snapping his fingers, in the usual way, he called out, “here, dresser, bring the first grave-digger's clothes down; you are just come in time—Shuter was going to *double* it with *Polonius*—that's my brave boy—come now give us *Parsons*—put your right leg foremost—bring 'em down—the *natives* like it *broad*.” Without being permitted to speak, I was hustled into the grave-digger's dress, and consoled myself not a little at being pressed into present pay, and good quarters. Not having seen old Shuter, and the rest of them, for a long time, they sent for a

large jorum of strong Hereford beer, to cheer me after my fatigue, and as I did not go on till the fifth act, sat behind the scenes, cracking jokes, as snug and happy as a prince. I assure you, Mr. Romney, I did not drink much more than a quart, but it proved "too potent for the constitution of your humble servant." This was glorious fun to the actors, the rascals *quizzed* me in every corner. However, I got through with the dialogue tolerably well, except now and then *clipping the king's English* ;" but when I should have descended into the grave, I found my head was heavier than my heels ; in spite of all my reasoning powers, the censorium precipitately found the center of gravity, leaving my feet in view of the audience. It unfortunately happened that the pick-axe I held in my hand came in contact with my proboscis, which is, you know, none of the smallest, and received such a laceration, that I was carried to a lodging streaming with blood. But now comes on *your* share of the adventure."

A

" *My* share? what do you mean?"

" Why, a gentleman who happened to be in the stage-box, and saw the whole transac-

tion, came behind the scene, with a surgeon, and I suppose having inquired my name, called the next day at my lodging. His appearance was both handsome and gentlemanly, but anxiety was visibly painted in his countenance.

“ After inquiring into the state of my wound, he said, “ I am informed, Sir, your name is Lebrun, pray were you not in Mr. Romney’s company at Worcester?”

“ I answered in the affirmative, when, with increasing interest, he said,

“ Can you inform me where he is at present?”

“ I was sorry it was out of my power to give him the information he required; ‘ No one,’ said I, ‘ respects Mr. Romney more than I do; heavy misfortunes drove him from Worcester, and I have not been able to trace him since. A flying report, I am sorry to say, prevailed, that he had joined a set of American outlaws at Bristol, but I am certain it is false, for he will never forfeit the character of an honest man.’ A visible de-

jection at first spread itself over the manly countenance of the stranger, but when I mentioned ‘American outlaws,’ the blood mounted into his face, and was succeeded by a look almost ferocious.

“Stifling his emotion, at length he said, ‘Mr. Lebrun, you are right, the report is false; I was materially concerned in what happened to Romney at Bristol; I am sorry, *very* sorry, you cannot tell me his present abode—poor fellow!’ Then turning away to hide an emotion he could scarcely conceal, he took from his pocket-book a card—‘That, Mr. Lebrun, is my name, would I could give you my address, but that is so precarious, it might only lead to error.’

“He then inclosed the card in a five pound bank-note, and with a manner that would have graced nobility said, ‘I do not, Mr. Lebrun, mean to hurt your feelings by the liberty I am taking, Romney spoke well of you; you are his friend, he is mine, your circumstances I know are not affluent, your accident will lead to expense, which for the above reasons I have a right to participate. If ever you see your friend Romney, tell him I

have, for the last two months, been unremittingly in search of him, and now leave this kingdom—leave Europe—never to return.' He then left me. Here is the card."

I was not surprised to read the name of "Charles Camelford," but was very much affected; and it was some time before I could compose myself sufficiently to attend to the conclusion of Tony's narrative.

"In a couple of days I found myself as well as ever, but as the company were on the point of leaving Hereford for Cheltenham, and as I had no particular desire, just then, to visit the latter place, I declined W——'s invitation, and determined immediately to prosecute my intended tour. With a guinea in my pocket I always felt myself an independent being; now I had four, and my consequence was considerably increased; so with my bundle, my stick, and the odd volume of "*Sterne*," I set out in the highest exhilaration of spirits. At peace with myself, and all the world, I leisurely pursued my journey, regularly took my *drops*, made merry whenever I could find a good laughter-

loving soul to join me, and at length arrived at this place; where I am engaged at twelve shillings per week, and happy, truly happy to see you. But where is the little darling, and my old friend the lap-dog? I must pay my respects, and know if I can make myself useful."

We adjourned to the inn, and the meeting between my wife and Tony was mutually productive of pleasure. After a sociable cup of coffee, we went to the theatre to see "She stoops to conquer," and the "Deaf Lover." The place was small, but neat and compact; it was the height of the bathing season, the audience were respectable, and I thought I saw a temporary prospect of comfort. Tony undertook to give us a brief history of each performer as they made their *entrée*. There are Mr. and Mrs. P——, in Old Harcastle and his wife; you see they have taken my best part from me, and given it to a man who thinks, because he has the lungs of a Stentor, and makes faces like a mountebank, that he is an actor—then the fellow never knows a line."

I smiled at Tony's last expression ; for, in the actor's phrase, " he never knew the *ghost* of a line."

" That person in Tony Lumpkin is a Mr. Giles, and takes his name, I fancy, from the place of his nativity, for a greater *black St. Giles'* never produced. He who struts on for Young Marlow, is that mouthing, monotonous coxcomb, Moneypenny, who fancies all the ladies are in love with him. The man who plays Hastings is no great actor, but he is a *character*, and I'll give it you in a few words. His name is Egerton, he is a young man of education, respectable family, and some expectations; of a sound understanding, and excellent disposition, but so tinctured with eccentricity, that many think him mad; however, " there is method in his madness, if the fools could find it out;" he has a smattering of almost all the sciences, and in some things is really clever; but where he is most weak, there he fancies himself the strongest: above all, he is continually making improvements, or what he fancies such, upon every new project or undertaking that comes within his knowledge. He likewise

fancies himself a capital musician, but that his most partial friends will not allow. I'll introduce you to him, you will find him upon the whole a superior character. The lady who plays Miss Hardcastle is a decent figure, with moderate talents; her present name is Mrs. Giles, formerly Mrs. Pine, alias Mrs. ———, but we won't grow scurrilous. Now observe Sir Charles Marlow, he comes *growling* and grumbling, like a dog that has lost a bone. That, sir, is old Venables, the most miserable being (except another I shall presently introduce you to) that nature ever formed; though nearly sixty, he is wretched because he does not play young Marlow, and lately left a very good situation, because they put a younger man in Romeo, and made him play the Friar. Poor old Ven! only give him *parts*, though ever so unfit for him, and he is happy. You observed the little fat fellow that played Diggory, that man is an actor, but he is an *odd fish* too; *his* hobby is, to make every body about him believe he is miserable; you cannot offend him more than by telling him he is happy, or even comfortable; and to see those round him *really* as wretched as he *pretends* to be, is the only

pleasurable sensation he is capable of; his name is Lewis, you have heard of Phil. Lewis, better known by the name of the "king of grief."

At the end of the play, Mr. Egerton came forward, and announced *Lord Ogleby* and *Fanny*, in the "Clandestine Marriage," by Mr. and Mrs. Romney; after which we retired to the inn. In the morning Tony procured us a comfortable lodging, and at ten o'clock we assembled at the theatre, to rehearse. If the eccentricities of this little circle had surprised me by Tony's relation, I was still more struck with the justice of his remarks, when I became acquainted with them, and three minutes did not elapse before that took place; for, instead of being introduced as a stranger into the green room, they, *sans ceremonie*, entered into conversation with as much familiarity as if I had been an established member of the company. We came in, it should seem, in the midst of a discourse, which suffered not the smallest interruption from our appearance.

"You may say what you will," said M——, "but I think Lyme a very pleasant

place—what say you, Mr. Romney? Aye,” continued he, strutting before the glass, “and there’s some devilish fine girls there.” “Pray, sir,” said Egerton, addressing himself to me, “did you hear what success the person met with in the diving-bell? He made one of his experiments at Lyme, I understand; I should like to have been there, for I have studied the subject, and could give some *improvements* that would be of service to society.”——“Nonsense!” growled out old Venables, “you had better endeavour to make some improvements in your acting; that’s the subject you ought to study. When I was acting manager at”——“Ah, *miser cordia!*” exclaimed Lewis, who sat sighing in a corner——“what have I done, that I should never have been manager nor acting manager? You have all feathered your nests at the public expense, whilst I”——“You be d—d!” said Giles, who then came in——“you are always weeping and wailing, and never happy, unless retailing your miseries, and making us as melancholy as yourself.”——“*Od rabbit it!*” cried Tony, “you are too severe upon his majesty; the worst you can say of him is, that he is for ever chaunting ‘*Let’s all be unhappy together!*’ whilst the

burden of *my* song is, ‘*Be gone, dull care!*’” At this moment I was called on the stage, and lost the continuance of this strange dialogue, in which the dispositions of the several speakers became apparent.

Amidst the various miseries—and plenty there are that surround the life of an actor—there are some pleasures undefinable to the world in general; the foremost is, performing a part, to which we think ourselves adequate, and from which we hope to receive well-earned applause. This was my case at present; the danger of the seas—the fear of creditors—the dark prospect in future, were all forgotten in the idea of pleasing.

Every minutia of dress was practised with studied care; no limner was ever more anxious in portraying beauty, than I was to render myself ugly. At length, with the assistance of Indian ink, ochre, carmine, and chalk, I sat myself down in the green room, a very fit representative, in my own opinion, of the Old Beau. Indeed, the effect my appearance produced was highly flattering, and every thing went on favourably till the fourth act, in which I expected to bring down bursts

of applause; with great labour, and copious perspiration, I had gone through great part of this long and truly interesting scene, when, at the climax and grand point, having worked up my feelings to a pitch of enthusiasm, and thrown myself into an attitude always successful,—a butcher's dog, from the middle of the pit, set up a piteous howl, that threw the house into convulsions of laughter. All the feelings I had been labouring to excite in the audience, fled in a moment at the bark of a cur. This unexpected interruption threw such a damp on my spirits, that I walked coolly through the remainder of the part, and returned home, wishing myself any thing but an actor.

This unpropitious evening was likewise remarkable for one of the most tremendous storms I had ever seen; it commenced about midnight. The wind blew a hurricane, accompanied with hail, rain, thunder, and lightning. The peaceful inhabitants were roused from their beds by this war of elements, and much damage was done amongst the shipping; two outward-bound vessels put into Swansea, and some unfortunate beings were lost.

I shall now leave the theatre, and its concerns, for a while, to relate an event which followed the storm, and proves, beyond all doubt, that good springs out of evil.

On examining my purse, Camelford's ring was found to be considerably damaged; this was a matter of serious import, and to have it neatly repaired, my immediate business. For this purpose I applied to a jeweller, who attended Swansea for the summer season, and anxiously pressed him to use his utmost skill, that the fracture might not be visible. Whilst we were in conversation, two ladies entered the shop, the eldest of whom, with uncommon earnestness, begged to look at the ring, at the same time a paleness overspread her countenance, and she tottered into the arms of her friend. A glass of water restored her, and I left the shop, strongly recommending repose to the invalid lady, and enforcing expedition and care to the jeweller.

I had been at home about half an hour, and was attentively reading the part of *Sir Peter Teazel*, when a fellow, with a constable's staff in his hand, rudely entered the room, and desired me to follow him. With-

out, at the moment, considering the improbability of the matter, I immediately concluded that my creditors had traced me, and this was an action for debt. To pass the remainder of my days within the dreadful walls of a prison, took such forcible possession of my mind, that I overlooked the agitation of my wife, who, pale and woe-begone, was leaning on the arm of the sofa, impressed with the same idea. I was flying to comfort her; but the fellow, mistaking my movement for an attempt to escape, seized hold of my arm—"Stop, my master! we are not to be *done* that way; the justice says, you're a dangerous *parson*, so you and I *don't* part *no* more, till I *delivers* you up to his worship."

Mrs. R —, not being at all a nervous subject, soon recovered her presence of mind, and prepared to accompany me; Tony, who came in at the same instant, swore he would go with us, all the world over. We marched along, followed by a *charitable* mob, who, in their various conclusions, had consigned me to the gallows long before we reached the hall of justice. The words "highwayman and thief" met my ears, but without any deter-

minate application, and when we appeared before the magistrate, I was completely bewildered with my own thoughts.

Seated beside his Welsh worship, I perceived the jeweller, and the two ladies I had left in his shop. The truth now flashed upon my mind, like a ray of light; the fatal ring was, perhaps, claimed—I looked attentively at the elderly lady—her face, I thought, was not that of an entire stranger, though in what particular place we had before met, I could not call to mind. Was it possible she could be the person from whom Camelford took the ring? I scrutinized her countenance once more, but could not assimilate her features with those of Lady Mary's companion in the post-chaise near Furness Abbey.

My ruminations were ended by the justice, who, in a very magisterial tone, said,

“ You sir! I say, pray, where did you get that ring?”

“ ’Twas given me by a friend.”

“ I believe that is a falsehood. Come, come, you had better speak the truth at once—Did you never see this lady before?”

“ I do not call to mind, but I think I have.”

“ Well, then, I'll help your recollection; it was, if I mistake not, in a post-chaise, on the road from Ulverstone to Kendal—Does such a circumstance come within your remembrance? You were then, as you are now, very fond of disguising your face. Aye, aye, you have played more parts in your time, than you can honestly account for. But we shall put an end to your career, and the last scene you perform will, I doubt not, be a tragic one. Clerk, make out the *mitimus*.”

“ *Od rabbit it!* Mr. Justice, surely you are not going to commit my friend to jail?”

“ Yes, I am, fellow, and you too, if you do not pay proper respect to the Bench.”

“ I think, Sir,” replied I, “ you had better pause upon this business; 'tis a serious in-

jury to imprison an honest man, and I declare as solemnly as I would were my last hour at hand, that I am not the person who deprived that lady of her ring. My word solemnly pledged, prevents me, otherwise I could fully elucidate this affair. Perhaps the lady may recollect two sportsmen who came upon the instant the disguised horseman rode away, I am the younger of those two; but am not at liberty to say how the ring came into my possession, otherwise than as I answered before; 'twas given me as a pledge of friendship, and never will I betray the confiding injured being, who trusted his secret to my keeping."

"Oh! oh! my friend, what then you are only the receiver of stolen goods; but, according to the laws of the land, the receiver is as bad as the thief.—A fine speech you have made about honesty and friendship truly! I wonder you did not introduce honour too; for we are told there is honour amongst thieves. Come, Clerk, make out this very honest, honourable, friendly gentleman's mittimus."

"Nay then, sir, I must go one step beyond what I at first intended, and declare

that the gentleman who took the ring, had the best right to it, it was the property of his father!—of his mother!”

The words were no sooner out of my mouth, than the lady fainted away, and a gentleman, whom I instantly recognized to be Camelford, rushed through the crowd, and snatched her out of the arms of her supporting friend. In a state of insensibility the poor lady remained till the arrival of a surgeon, who ordered her to be carefully conveyed to her lodgings, previous to the operation of bleeding, and other means likely to promote her recovery. Camelford having whispered something to the magistrate, took Mrs. R. and I under each arm, and left us at our lodging, promising to return as soon as he had made proper inquiries after his mother. We were seating ourselves at the tea-table, when he rushed in, and embracing us both, called for our congratulations, on the unexpected, happy event, we had just witnessed. “The ways of Providence,” continued he, “are inscrutable! and mortals who are too apt to contract the power of omnipotence within the narrow circle of their own finite ideas, frequently find themselves taken by

surprise; events are produced, and circumstances brought to light, from causes, to them improbable, unforeseen, and unexpected. From the bowels of the deep, I was last night miraculously preserved, to become the means not only of preserving you from the disgrace of a prison, but likewise of discovering, I trust, a repentant mother, after whom, till this day, I have made a fruitless search, since I parted with you, my friends, at Bristol.

“ Our precipitate removal that morning, was owing to the unexpected arrival of the senior's youngest son. Our poor old friend was dangerously ill, and very anxious to close his eyes surrounded by his children, as he fondly called us all. They were still at Furness Abbey; the distance was considerable, and no time to be lost if we meant to witness the closing scene of the good senior's mortal pilgrimage. Suffice it to say, he died the death of a virtuous man, blessing us all, and recommending his immediate relatives to my care and protection. We buried him by his own desire, in the cavern, and shed the tear of affection over his grave.

“ As the month of September was the time fixed for leaving England, I determined to pass the interim in making every possible search for the owner of the ring; and as you mentioned Lady Mary’s abode to be at Llandaff in South Wales, and that she had a relative who bore the name of Bishop, I hoped by these means to hear of, if not find the person, I was so anxious to see. Accordingly Thompson, Lillo, Mrs. Camelford, and myself, once more bade adieu to Furness Abbey, our friends appointing to meet us at Bristol, the first week in September.

“ We made a pleasant, easy and interesting tour, but without success respecting the main object of it. At Llandaff, we learnt the death of Lady Mary Buller, but could gather no particulars that led in the remotest manner to a knowledge of her travelling companion.

“ Passing through Hereford we visited the theatre; an accident happened to one of the performers, which led to a discovery that his name was Lebrun. I made it my business to see him, in hopes through his means to trace you, but here I was as usual unsuccessful. In short, I despaired of ever again be-

holding the ring, or the lady, when Providence riding on the storm, directed our bark—conspiring elements led us to the brink of destruction, to shew the power of HIM, who out of evil produceth good.”

At the end of my friend's narrative, we returned with him to the inn, to pay our respects to Mrs. Camelford, and the rest of the party. Fanny, the lovely, interesting Fanny, flew into our arms, and as I embraced her, whispered, “Mrs. Camelford is dead! prepare Charles for the fatal news.” Shocked at the unexpected and sudden end of this unhappy woman, I took my friend into the garden, and by degrees unfolded the melancholy intelligence, which though he bore it like a man, he felt it also as a man.

Thus fell, a martyr to sensibility, the once beautiful, elegant, frail Mrs. Camelford, who, the last five years, had lived a life of penitence and almost seclusion. From the wound innocently inflicted by her son, she recovered, but a wounded conscience is beyond the reach of medicine; this preyed upon her delicate frame, and was severely augmented by the reflection of her guilty partner's unprepared

summons before the tribunal of an offended judge. I am unacquainted with the motives of her voyage, and the manner in which she spent her time in England, both which were explained to her son, in some papers delivered to him after her death, but of their contents he chose to be silent.

Six fleeting days we spent happily with our friends; on the evening of the last, as Camelford and I were walking on the beach, he took from his pocket two bank-notes of an hundred pounds each, and with tremulous voice and much emotion said, "Romney, receive these as the last legacy of a friend, for something whispers me, our separation will be final; unless (faintly smiling) you should be tempted to try your fortune in the new world. Actors I am told are in great request there, and who knows but *my* quarter of the globe may make you amends, for what you have suffered in your own." Then squeezing my hand with much energy, he said, "make my affectionate respects to Mrs. R——," and left me almost choked with emotion.

The next day I was grieved but not surprised to find the vessel had sailed by the

morning's tide, and that I had seen the last of Charles Camelford, a friend of inestimable worth and uncommon qualities ; to a strong, independent and well cultivated mind he added a suavity of manners, that commanded universal admiration : with strength unsurpassed, and valour unconquerable, he was harmless as infancy, and gentle as a pet-lamb. If he is still an inhabitant of this lower hemisphere, and the "*Itinerant*" should cross the Atlantic, he will, I am sure, read a continuation of the memoir, and recognise himself and his friends, though under fictitious names.

CHAP. XXII.

"THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

SHERIDAN.

"Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something; nothing;
 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
 But he that filches from me my good name,
 Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
 But makes me poor indeed."

OTHELLO.

SEVERAL days elapsed ere I could pay that attention to my theatrical concerns that interest and duty demanded; but time, which conquers all things, blunted, in some measure, the acuteness of my feelings; I determined to rally my spirits, and think as little as possible on the past. In this effort I was encouraged and supported by my wife, who, though keenly feeling our deprivation, had a flow of spirits always at command, which, when called into action, were sure to put the *blue devils* to flight; Tony, too, threw in his

farcical philosophy to stimulate me to action, and their united endeavours had the desired effect.

The theatre was well attended, my efforts were crowned with as much success as I could expect, and Mrs. R ——— made great progress in the line of spirited acting; my comic songs pleased the *natives*, and our attempts in the general run of the drama, seemed to give satisfaction to the visitors; in short, matters in general wore a smiling aspect, hope revived, and I looked forward to future success, with some grounds of probability. Silly mortal! could the book of fate have been placed before me, I should have sunk into despair; every energy would have been paralysed, and from a certainty of failure, each effort relaxed by despondence. Happy state of mental blindness! that leaves a power to enjoy the present, which foreknowledge would entirely preclude.

The manager was a perfectly inoffensive character, who strove to conciliate the affections of his people, and to render them happy and unanimous as a body; but in every

community there will be found discordant spirits, who disseminate rancour and falsehood to the destruction of social order.

Giles was a demon of mischief, and scarcely a day passed but somebody felt the effects of it; at length it came to my turn, and all arising from the song of "The Four and Twenty Fiddlers," which Giles had been in the habit of singing before my arrival. My manner of executing it, and the singularly laughable costume I adopted, were highly applauded, and from this time Giles was my sworn and inveterate foe.

Serious consequences often arise from trifling causes, and insignificant as the above may appear, it ultimately drove me from a comfortable situation, and brought on a train of unpleasant events, that could neither be foreseen nor avoided.

It is natural to suppose that so singular a circumstance as Camelford's appearance in the hall of justice, the discovery of his mother, her indisposition and death, excited general curiosity, and various conjectures were

formed accordingly. The whole transaction was involved in mystery—a person is apprehended for having in his possession a lady's ring of which she had been robbed! an examination takes place—his mittimus is made out—when lo! the whole proceeding is stopped by the sudden appearance of the lady's son who was driven ashore the night before in a heavy gale—the criminal is discharged without any proofs of his innocence—he is known to have placed 200*l.* in the bank—but where did he get it? “that is the question.” Flying reports to my disadvantage assailed me through the medium of Tony; in his nocturnal rambles he became acquainted with the opinion of the town, of which he regularly informed me, and I found myself daily sinking in the public esteem. The day previous to my benefit, a pamphlet made its appearance, entitled the “American outlaw,” which contained a false account of Camel-ford's history, intermixed with some truths; my misfortunes at Worcester were also brought forward, and painted as crimes. It was stated, “that I had joined a desperate gang of American outlaws, who had swindled the public to a great extent, that

Swansea was the general *rendezvous*, where a division of the spoil had taken place, and my share amounted to 200*l.*—that the whole of their depredations had nearly been made public by a discovery of the ring, had not the lady by threats been intimidated from proceeding."

As soon as I read this villainous fabrication, I hinted my suspicions of its author; "you are right," cried Tony, "you may thank the four and twenty fiddlers for that, I hate those silly songs, they please fools, but always disgust the judicious; give me a good sterling actor, Mr. Romney, such as you have seen me. *Od rabbit it!* I that have *fop'd* it in Marplot, Belcour and Don Felix! to be sent on here to say 'the coach is waiting' to puppies for twelve *bob* a week!" Tony's pleasantry, which seldom failed to raise a smile, lost its effect; the pamphlet hurt my pride, and I plainly saw would ruin my benefit. My wife's round, good-humoured face clouded with sorrow, and that was the never failing touchstone to my feelings. At length Tony jumped up: "I'll tell you what, my masters, fine words butter no parsnips; you know I always tell you the truth whether it pleases

you or not. There will be no comfort for you in this company, while Saint Giles is a member of it. When we come to the *end of the town*, strike your tent, and beat a march; there are theatres enough in the kingdom, or turn manager once more yourself. *Od rabbit it!* if I had 200*l.* I'd let them see what acting was." The clock struck ten, and we prepared to attend rehearsal; the green room of a theatre is an epitome of the world; and, as in every other class of society, more prone to take the ill, than the good-natured side of a question. The pamphlet had been generally read, and I thought as I entered generally relished, from the smile that prevailed. Some condoled with me, others blamed me for being uneasy at such an impotent attempt to injure me, whilst Giles vociferated imprecations on the villain who could thus "stab in the dark." As this was the general topic, I rallied my spirits, and endeavoured to laugh it off, at the same time exerting all my powers to wrest Camelford's character from the obloquy that was thrown upon it: "This," I continued, "I am bound to do, not only by justice and common honesty, but by gratitude; for to his kindness I have been frequently indebted, both in a pecuniary point

of view, and for personal exertion; to crown all, I am obliged to his free bounty, and the feelings of benevolence, for the 200*l.* so maliciously mentioned in the pamphlet."

"What!" cried Lewis in amazement, "and are you really possessed of 200*l.*? I have been an actor for twenty years, and no one could ever say, 'black's the white of my eye,' yet poor Phil. has not 5*l.* to save him from a poor-house; what have I done to deserve this?"

"Why," replied Venables, "you have done what you ought not to have done, you *did* Clytus, last night, and every body knows I ought to have *done* it; 'twas my *stock* part in Plymouth for ten years."——

"Pray," interrupted Egerton, "what has your *stock* part to do with the subject in question? but talking of stocks, puts me in mind of an improvement I have made in that instrument of punishment, and I heartily wish the writer of this pamphlet was confined in them for a few hours: I can give you the idea in a moment (drawing two chairs together) here you confine the feet—here the

arms—and here the neck—”. Tony at this moment drew away one of the chairs, and left the ingenious mechanic sprawling on the floor.

As I expected, so it turned out; my benefit failed, and having made up my mind to leave Mr. Masterman, I wrote to several managers, but without receiving any very tempting offer. In the mean time, I turned over Tony’s advice in my mind, to *ascend* once again the *Managerical Throne*.

About a week before the theatre closed, Tony burst into my room, brimful of intelligence, to inform me, that my old manager Davies had advertised his wardrobe and scenes for sale, being unable to carry on the scheme. “Now, my dear fellow,” continued he, pulling up his small-clothes, and strutting about the room, “your fortune is made, nothing could have happened more lucky; his *sticks* and *rags* can’t be worth much, and, as to his circuit, that is open to any body, ‘’tis mine, ’tis thine,’ so no great expense being incurred, no great loss can accrue. I’ll be your acting manager, your general, and lay siege to all the barns and stables in the

country. I see a world of good fortune towards us, that the womb of time will bring forth; methinks I see in large characters against the wall, ‘Romney’s Company of Comedians, conducted by that facetious companion, and admirable actor Tony Lebrun.’ *Od rabbit it!*” drawing his large cocked hat over his right eye-brow, “the very name of Lebrun is enough to make your fortune.”

When a traveller has the choice of three roads, he takes that most likely to bring him to his destination; but if there be only one straight-forward path, he must proceed, though it prove rugged and uneven. So it was with me; I had no choice—I found myself under the necessity of again embarking in a concern, similar to the one which had plunged me into misery and distress. I wrote to Davies, and offered him fifty pounds for his theatrical property, a sum far beyond their value; but he was in difficulties, and I had a regard for him. Thus I began my managerial career, by sacrificing interest to feeling—a rock I had split on before. The return of post brought the following letter:—

“Dear Sir—I accept your liberal proposal, and sincerely hope you may be more prosperous than I have been. Under the necessity of abdicating my *throne*, I solicit the honour of becoming one of your *subjects*. Mrs. and Miss Bridges, and Jonathan Davies, are all that remain of a once-respectable company; perhaps you will engage them—you know the extent of their abilities, and will find them useful. You are aware of my utility—I can go on for any thing, at a moment’s notice, and my success in getting *bespeaks*, and *taking towns*, is proverbial. In a word, the whole of my endeavours shall be exerted for your interest, and you will not doubt my sincerity, when I subscribe myself,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate and faithful servant,

Oct. 19, 1786.

JOHN DAVIES.”

The evening the theatre closed, I took leave of the company. The manager shook me heartily by the hand, and hoped we should meet again; Venables gave me a methodical account of his progress, when acting manager at Plymouth Dock, where he had “played *Hamlet* five times, by desire.” Eger-ton, with whom I was really sorry to part, put a drawing into my hand, of an improved method of working *scenes* and *wings*; and Lewis proved himself worthy of his title (King of Grief) for he whined through his

farewell, and sighed forth, "Good bye, Mr. Romney—happy man!—worth two hundred pounds!—what have I done?—but fortune never favours poor Phil.!"

Davies's small company were just concluding their season at a little fishing-town, called Brixham, on the coast of Devonshire. I hired a boat, which conveyed us and Tony to the desired port; but, oh heavens! such a town! and such a theatre! The latter was a barn, distant from the former about half a mile; it stood by the side of a lane, a melancholy memento of solitude; for not an habitation of any description was within sight. The manager rejoiced to see me; for, besides the place I held in his esteem, the pecuniary aid I came prepared to administer was a welcome renovation to his almost dying circumstances, and soon restored them to a state of convalescence. I found Davies, on my return, exactly what I left him—a smiling philosopher, in the midst of poverty and distress. His company consisted of four men and three women—himself, Jonathan Davies, John Jefferson (son of the late Jefferson, formerly of Drury-lane Theatre) and Grubbins, the stage-keeper, who performed occasion-

ally. It was play-night, and a good house expected, from some novelty to be exhibited—and novelty, indeed, it was, such as an English audience never before witnessed. The Stormont East-Indiaman, Capt. Curtis, then lay in Torbay, waiting for a wind; on board her were a great number of Lascars, on their return to China, and, amongst them, some musicians, who, in their own country, bore the character of *eminent*. Davies had got leave of Capt. Curtis for five of these men to come on shore, and exhibit at his theatre in the evening.

Bills were printed, explanatory of the entertainment, and the unfortunate Lascars paraded, in their national habit, through every street in Brixham, with Manager Davies at their head, and followed by a mob, which comprised nearly all the women and children in the place. At length the performance commenced, and consisted of a mutilated play and farce; to conclude with singing and music, by these celebrated foreigners.

The minstrel was, apparently, eighty years of age, and, I believe, left home in quality of priest to his poor countrymen. His instru-

ment was simply a piece of wood, with two catgut strings, which produced the same number of notes. After he had tweaked these for about five minutes, he was joined by his vocal companions, whose whole collection of words consisted of "*Bee barw, Bee barw.*" To say that any thing like music was produced, would be asserting a thing that has no foundation; the whole formed a combination of tones, to which language would be inadequate—it was hideous!—in a word, the bagpipe is heavenly harmony, compared to their "*Bee barw,*" and that I conceive to be the worst apology for music that ever this country produced. The whole group were, what we should call, ugly in the extreme (you see exactly such figures upon a tea-chest or Indian screen); and as they sung, their heads rolled about with such velocity, you could not distinguish a feature. At first, this strange exhibition was attended with shouting and laughter, and some change was expected for the better; but they still continued "*Bee barw, Bee barw,*" till Davies thought proper to drop the curtain, to save these poor disciples of Apollo from the vengeance of the swinish multitude, which, that night, composed the audience.

After the performance, we waited to accompany Davies and his little company to town. By this time the audience were all dispersed; the night was dark—the road dreary; I led the way, with the lantern, followed by Tony and my wife. When we had proceeded about half way, I heard Davies, who was in the rear, remonstrating with much warmth, and, turning back, beheld two respectable looking sailors, though in a state of ebriety. Their object seemed to be Miss Bridges, who held by Davies's arm, and, as I came up, Jefferson and Jonathan Davies had each singled out his man, but not before the manager lay sprawling in the ditch; they too would, I make no doubt, have shared the same fate (for the sailors were young and strong) had I not stepped in, and, holding out my hand in a free, unconcerned manner, exclaimed, "What the devil are you at now, lads—fighting? Give me your hands, if you are gentlemen, and I am sure you are, because you are sailors—and every brave sailor is a gentleman, d—n me! I'll stand by you whilst I have life. What's the cause of quarrel?"

Seeing a well-dressed person interfere, and not suspecting me to be of the party, they made a pause, which I relieved, by crying out, "Bless my soul! Davies, is that you! Why, gentlemen, these are the players; if we hurt the players, we shall have no more fun. Come, let's away to the next public-house, and drown all animosity in a glass of grog."

As it happened, I hit the right nail on the head; for, seizing me by the hand, one of them exclaimed, "Aye, b—t my eyes, if we don't!" So taking hold of each an arm, they led me to "*The Jolly Tar*," and I called for a bottle of wine. This conduct won their hearts; they swore I was the best fellow in the world, and made me promise to dine with them the next day. When I took my leave, one of them bawled out, "If you don't come to dinner, to-morrow, I'll blow your brains out the day after."

At the inn I found the whole party under great apprehensions for my safety. As soon as I left them, Tony, with the lantern, went to look after the killed and wounded; Manager Davies, he found seated under the

hedge with his eye swelled up, but instead of bewailing his fate, the philosopher said, "he'll *bespeak*, I know he'll *bespeak*, he has more interest than any man in town."

"What do you mean?" said Tony.

"Why he that knocked me down is a midshipman in the navy, his father is the richest man in Brixham, so go and tell Mr. Romney to get his *bespeak*, he'll be sorry for what he has done in the morning, and my black eye will help the business."

A continued round of poverty and distress had so habituated Davies to look only to self-interest, in his every transaction, that the nobler faculties of his mind were absorbed in the pursuit of gain, and as I have observed before, he thought nothing mean or dishonourable, that brought an honest penny. By the blow of the sailor, though he lost the sight of one eye, he plainly saw with the other a recompence that drove from his mind all thoughts of revenge, and he considered the prospect of a good house ample and sufficient reward for the pain and degradation he suffered.

Jefferson, who was much inclined to fanaticism, was leaning over a gate, putting up pious ejaculations to be removed from a line of life, attended with so many dangers, and for which he was very ill calculated, a profession replete with misery, poverty, and contempt. J. Davies was more properly employed than either of them, in taking care of the females, whose situation required support and assistance.

“ *Od rabbit it!* gentlemen, you are the *rummest* set I ever met with! the manager seated in a ditch, building a castle on the foundation of a black eye, and the saint recommending himself to Providence, by vili-fying the profession by which he lives; for my part, I think it is as gentlemanly a calling as a body could wish; it requires a greater versatility of talent than any other, and where a man is possessed of ability and proper conduct, he may pass as pleasant, as innocent, and as useful a life as in any other line whatever. *Od rabbit it!* I have smoked my pipe in it for twenty years, and who is happier or merrier than Tony Lebrun!”

Poor Jefferson was ill calculated to answer Tony's merry mode of reasoning; and still less inclined to accede to it; he was a good-hearted creature; but much given to view things through a gloomy medium; his tall, spare figure, saturnine complexion, and lank black hair, gave him more the appearance of a sectarian preacher than a player.

After supper we entered upon business, and as Davies had no other town to go to, it was agreed that I should set out in quest of one. This business I was as unfit for as Jefferson was for an actor; possessing an independence of mind, that increased under misfortunes, my temperament could neither brook the *hauteur* of the purse-proud, nor the insolence of official pride. Aware of my own insufficiency for this new undertaking, I determined to take Tony with me.

"Aye, aye," said he, "two heads are better than one; I'll attack the justices, and you shall build the theatre; I know the exact time—half past four—his worship in his easy chair—taking his wine—methinks I see him now—rosy cheeks—double chin—gouty legs—'Oh! what are you a player, hey?'"

‘ Yes, your worship, my name is Lebrun, of French extraction, descended from the great Lebrun, although now I condescend to manage a company of players, who for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral——’ ‘ Why, Mr. Lebrun, you are a very facetious companion, sit down and take a glass of wine.’ So to it we go, glass after glass, throw in my jokes occasionally, he shakes his fat sides and gives permission, we both get as drunk as fiddlers, I leave him snug in his chair, and stagger home as well as I can; *Od rabbit it!* I’ve such a winning way, nobody can refuse me.”

The next day, to gratify Davies, I dined with the midshipman, who promised to patronize a play, and as he seemed greatly ashamed of his behaviour, I had no doubt of his making every exertion to render it profitable.

CHAP. XXIII.

" THE COMEDY OF ERRORS."

" SHAKSPEARE."

" Where we lay, the chimneys were blown down."

" MACBETH."

THE town we were to besiege lay about twenty miles distant, and as it was evening when we arrived, every kind of business was deferred till the next day.

Tony had beguiled the hour after supper, with some of his best stories, told in his very best manner, and I was ringing for the chambermaid, when a figure entered the room, whose appearance provoked risibility, beyond the power of feature to withstand. He was a fat man, seemingly about forty, with a large bowl of punch in one hand, and leading an immense mastiff with the other. A tye-wig,

with large curls on each side, covered a head of uncommon dimensions, the face of which resembled a full moon, as exhibited on a clock, but divested of colour. To a shabby green coat, he added a scarlet waistcoat, bound with gold, and, as if in contrast with his face, a remarkably small round hat. Thus furnished, and thus equipped, he stood before us. A momentary silence followed his entrance, till Tõny, who knew every body, jumped up, and cried, “ My old manager, by Jupiter! give us a wag of your *parw*, old boy, over the table; for I dare not approach, fearful you should let loose the dog of war upon me.” They were soon seated, without recollecting there was a third person in the room, and the stranger opened the conversation.

“ Ah! you comical son of *Molpomely*! I should not have known you *was* here, but for that there front drop; (pointing to a wainscot partition that divided the two rooms) I am just arrived from Honiton, they shewed me into the next room, and hearing my old friend Tony’s voice, I thought as how we might as well take our *drops spontaneous*, and comfortable together. Old Keeper here fol-

lowed the gig, so I *introduce* him, because, as I always *says*, Love me, love my dog."

"You are right, manager; it is dangerous, to trust a madman without his *keeper*." A boisterous laugh followed this piece of wit, when Tony taking up the punch, and shaking hands with his acquaintance, said, "Come, here's good luck to you, my old boy."

This strange and odd looking character proved to be a Mr. Riggs, well known as manager of a small company, who had long visited the second-rate towns in Devonshire.

Tony introduced me to him, and giving me a significant look, said, "We are on our road to Bridgewater, where we have a little business, that I am not at liberty to explain." "Ah, ah!" replied Riggs, "I am *up* to your *gossip*, going to take the town I suppose; to say the truth, I am upon the same *lay* here; Davies has been writing I know, but I shall be before-hand with him. You know my old *gag* the *goldfinches*, (shaking a bag of money) I shall go in a *spontaneous* way. Mr. what's his name knows I've got the *singing birds*;

he's but a kind of an *artificial chap*, he'll be saying so and so, and so and so; but no matter for that, I come down with my so and so, and so finish the business. That's the way, my boy Tony, there's no standing the *gold-finches*."

The conversation now turned upon the parts they had played together. "Ah!" continued Tony, "I was considered a decent actor then; you remember my 'Old Hardcastle,' when 'She stoops,' was bespoke by the Hunt." "To be sure I *don't*," replied Riggs, taking off his wig, and rubbing his bald pate with his handkerchief, "did not I do *Sir Oliver Surface* with you? but if you want to see acting in a *bona fide* way, as a body may say, look at our Jack; his *Lingo* in the *Poor Soldier* beats 'em all; folks that have seen the *tip tops* in London, say Kemble's nothing to him. Why, his *library* of wigs, *spontaneous* as it may appear, cost him ten *quid* at least. But I say, my masters, won't you come over and give us a *lift*? my gig will hold us all—shan't cost you a *farden*. I'll write off directly to advertise you—Let me see—what shall be the play?—Hamlet? Aye! Hamlet by Mr. Romney, from the

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane—I know you never *was* there, but what of that? *Gag's* the word you know; Polonius by the celebrated Mr. Lebrun; my Jack *does* the grave-digger, I *go on* for the king, Winny plays *Lady Teazel*, and our Ann's *tip top* in Ophelia; so its all in the family you see. But soft ye, my masters, where's your Sir John Falstaff' all this time?"

I could contain myself no longer, and though Tony was used to his manner of casting plays, and jumbling the characters of one into the other, he joined heartily in the laugh, to the great discomfiture of Mr. Riggs, who was seriously bent on having the play performed in his own way.

Dashing the pen away, and wiping the copious dew from his forehead, he inquired the cause of our mirth. Tony ingeniously turn'd it off, by replying, "Who the devil can help it? You engage, advertise, and convey us to Honiton, without waiting for our consent. *Od rabbit it!* do you think time is of so little value, that we can afford to work for nothing, and neglect the business we came upon, into the bargain? Come,

down with your *dust*—what will you give us? A few of your *goldfinches* may, perhaps, sing to some tune.”

As soon as Riggs found money would be expected for our services, he veered about, and, laughing, said,

“ Why, Tony, my boy, I did not think you *was* so easily *had*. Do you suppose, I want to raise recruits? No, no, my lad, the regiment’s already too full; I only thought, in a *spontaneous* way, to try *soundings*, against a more *fitter* opportunity. So come, here’s success to the *smock* and *buckskin* !” and taking off the remainder of his punch, the mad manager (as Tony called him) with his keeper, bade us, *spontaneously*, “ Good night.”

“ There you see an instance, Mr. Romney, of a man getting money by a business he knows nothing about. Rigg’s company originally consisted of Mr. Punch, George Bateman, Jane Shore, and the whole court of King Solomon; in a word, he was a travelling puppet-showman, by which having saved money, he purchased a wardrobe and

scenes; and now, without the least knowledge of the drama, not able to read a play, or remember the characters belonging to each, but jumbling tragedy and comedy, play and farce, together, yet he undertakes 'to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to Nature; to shew Virtue her own feature, Scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the Time its form and pressure.' *Od rabbit it!* I wish he was at Honiton; we must go to work warily, and without loss of time." It was now agreed that we should begin the attack early in the morning; I was to wait upon the magistrate, and Tony upon the owner of the barn.

As I walked towards his worship's house, which was a short distance from the town, imagination threw so many ideal mortifications in my way, that I was frequently on the point of returning. At length I found myself at the gates of an extensive park, and boldly determined to proceed to the house, let the consequence be what it would.

Arrived at this superb mansion, I rang the bell with an air of authority, that, I hoped, would produce some degree of re-

spect, amongst the servants at least. Indeed, I had worked myself up to this, by the insult I expected to receive, and stood ready to meet scorn with the contempt it deserved; nay, I had determined, if provoked, to make a speech against oppression and the privileged orders, that would probably have produced a mittimus—perhaps a jail. On inquiring for Sir John P——, the servant, with much ceremony, ushered me into a large gothic hall, where half a dozen beautiful children were at play, who bowed and courtseyed as I passed into a handsome study. Left alone, I reflected with pleasure on the behaviour of the children and servant, and set it down in my own mind, as highly creditable to the master and mistress, and a prognostic of the urbanity and kindness that really characterized that amiable and *truly noble* couple.

When the door opened, I bowed with respect, at the same time with the pride of an independent spirit, that scorned the least spark of meanness. A gentlemanly, middle-aged person came forward, and, in a fascinating manner, prevented every degree of

embarrassment, by drawing two chairs to the fire, and requesting me to be seated.

“ I wait upon you, Sir John, on a business of moment to myself, but”——I was here interrupted by the entrance of a servant with Madeira and biscuits.

“ Business of moment, sir, is transacted with the greatest effect when the body is perfectly comfortable; therefore, take a glass of wine, ’twill refresh you after your walk.”

Thus encouraged, I made my request for leave to perform in the adjacent town.

“ Why really, sir, your appearance has greatly deceived me ; I took you for a clergyman, and expected some living had become vacant, in which my interest could have been useful ; but, whether preacher or player, ’tis the same thing to me, if I can render you service. Every permission that I can give, you are welcome to ; at the same time you are aware, that should any one be vile enough, through malice, fanaticism, or from any other motive, to lay an information, as a magistrate I am bound to notice it ; but I hope no-

thing of this kind will happen, and you may depend on the countenance and support of my family. We are fond of plays—I think their moral tendency good, and I know, from experience, they have helped to refine the manners of the lower classes in our little town; therefore I never withhold my consent, especially when made from a respectable quarter.”

I left the hospitable mansion of this worthy baronet with a cheerful and grateful heart. When greatness and goodness are connected, such characters become invaluable in society. Oh, ye worldlings! who wallow in luxury, and revel in dissipation, what heartfelt pleasure do you lose! The grateful smiles of relieved distress—the sincere affection of a surrounding happy tenantry—the glorious reflection, of having used power to prevent, not increase, misfortune—of seasoning justice with mercy, are a million of times more delightful than all the silly pomp of courts, the pride of office, or the indulgence of pampered appetite; these only serve to annihilate the noble energies of the soul, meant by Providence as the brightest ornament of human nature.

When I returned to the inn, I found Tony walking about the room, flourishing his cane, and singing “ *Through all the employments of life,*” &c.

“ Well, Tony, what bloody scene has Roscius now to act?”

“ Scene! I fear we shall have no occasion for *scenes* here; old *Pomposo*, yonder, sits like a judge robed in rags—fancies himself Cardinal Wolsey, and won’t converse with any body who is not recommended by a lord or a duke. To be serious, the owner of the barn is a half-maniack family pride has turned his brain; he demands all the etiquette of a prince, the least breach of which puts a period to the interview; he rings his broken glass, and old *Sicorax* tells you to *mizzle*. This was exactly my case. Would you believe it, Mr. Romney, I found this shaken-brained son of a b—h in a little dirty room, seated on a crazy, old-fashioned chair, and wrapped up in, what I suppose he called, a morning gown, but which, I believe, was neither more nor less than a moth-eaten bed-curtain, a hundred years old at least; on his head he wore a cap, of equal antiquity, which

had once been black velvet, and gave him the appearance of the conjurer, in ‘*Hudibras*.’ An old squinting sibyl introduced me, and making a most obsequious bow (for I smelt his character), I opened my business.

“Pray, friend,” said he, drawing up, and swelling with pride, like an enraged turkey-cock, “have you brought any letters from persons of distinction?” Replying in the negative, he took up a mutilated tumbler-glass, in which was something fastened with red sealing-wax, and, shaking it with great authority, convinced me, it was intended as a substitute for a bell. In an instant, *Sicorax* entered, when, pointing to his crazy door, and nodding with his still more crazy head, I found my absence would be agreeable; accordingly, I made myself scarce. *Od rabbit it!* I wish I had mobbed him—I could bite my tongue off, for leaving his beggarly house, without telling him a bit of my mind.”

Tony’s reception, and his whimsical mode of relating it, were highly laughable; I then told him my success with Sir John P——. “*Od rabbit it!* that’s lucky—what, then,

you have got permission !”——“ Yes, as far as he can officially grant it—he will countenance and support it; in short, he will look over it.”

“ Oh ! I understand you—he’ll wink at it; that puts me in mind of a devilish good story, and I’ll tell it you, to drive away the thoughts of *Pomposo*. Old Macklin (you have seen Macklin—something like me about the nose and chin—but no matter for that) I say, old Macklin was once manager of a small theatrical company, which he had selected from the Dublin theatres, and proposed to make his first campaign at C——; but, previous to this, it was necessary to obtain the mayor’s permission. Accordingly, he waited upon his worship, and found him busily employed, picking raisins in the shop (this was a sensible mayor—he had his *reasons* about him—not often the case—but a shaken-brained set, you know) Macklin accosted him—‘ Pray, sir, may we have permission to erect a theatre?’

“ ‘ A theatre !’ exclaimed the picker of raisins—‘ Oh ! I must consult the recorder.’ Now, you know, Mr. Romney, the recorder

is supposed not to be a fool ; and as it is necessary amongst the body corporate to have *one* man of common sense, the laws of the country (knowing their general deficiency) place a recorder to take care that no flagrant errors are committed ; who acts just as a showman does with his puppets—he moves the wires, and makes all their speeches. However, to return from my digression—Macklin was dismissed, with a promise of a final answer the next day. In the mean time the recorder was consulted. ‘ I think,’ replied he, ‘ you cannot officially grant leave, but you certainly may wink at him.’ ‘ I will,’ replied the mayor.

“ Macklin, true to his appointment, called the next day. ‘ Well, sir, have you considered my request—shall we have permission?’

“ The mayor winked at him.

“ ‘ I say, sir, shall we have your sanction?’

“ His worship still made no reply, but winked both his eyes, as if he had been in a convulsion fit.

“ ‘ What am I to understand by this ? ’ said Macklin, addressing a little apprentice-boy in the shop.

“ ‘ Why, sir, ’ said the boy, ‘ my master cannot grant you permission, but he may wink at you. ’ ”

“ ‘ Oh, oh ! ’ replied Macklin, with his usual dryness, ‘ what, then, I find the mayor’s permission is *all my eye* ! ’ ”

“ *Od rabbit it !* Mr. Romney, why don’t you laugh ? ”

“ Why, to tell you the truth, Tony, I was thinking more of the owner of the barn, than your story. What shall we do ? If the place cannot be procured, Sir John’s permission is useless. ”

“ Just before you came in, I had been listening to the landlord’s account of this crazy son of greatness. He is the only surviving branch of a once noble and opulent family, whose estates were confiscated at the time of the Rebellion. From his father he

inherits thirty pounds a year, and a pride of blood and family that could scarcely be supported by fifty thousand. His superiors, in point of fortune, do not associate with him, and with his equals he disdains to hold intercourse, so that he is a perfectly isolated being. Trade, and all who follow it, he looks upon with the most sovereign contempt. He is commonly known by the appellation of ‘*The Squire*,’ though he styles himself ‘*Honourable*,’ and has established a petty form of grandeur in his house, that is truly ridiculous, and subjects him to the imputation of insanity.

“ If we could but get a letter from a person of distinction? Egad! a thought strikes me—suppose I write him one, signed ‘*Sir Peter Teazle, Bart.*’ I’m sure it will do, and you shall carry it.” This expedient, ridiculous as it appeared, bore the face of probability. The squire, we were informed, knew little about plays, and had still less acquaintance amongst the great; there was, therefore, good reason to suppose a fictitious title might impose upon him; and as no injury was intended, or could happen from the deception, I undertook the embassy, and Tony wrote as follows:—

“ Sir—The bearer of this, although manager of a company of comedians, is a person of family, both ancient and honourable; he is a descendant of Sir Francis Gripe, and nearly related to the late Lord Ogleby, whose title he can assume at pleasure. I trust, you will not withhold your sanction and support to the recommendation of

“ PETER TEAZLE, Baronet.”

“ *Hoax Castle*, Oct. 14.”

This whimsical epistle afforded mirth that passed the time till six o'clock, and nothing definitively settled; old Riggs, too, was hoping about the town, confident of success, not knowing we had obtained the magistrate's permission.

I hurried away towards the mansion of this great man, which proved to be a small house, towards the outskirts of the town, in a visible state of decay. The old woman, as described by Tony, ushered me in, and informed her master, a gentleman requested an audience. It was the dinner-hour of this pompous being, and I heard him say, in a commanding tone, “ Shew him into the drawing-room.”

This *drawing-room* was contiguous to the kitchen, and stood upon nine square feet of ground, with a stone floor, and appropriate furniture; and as the door was left open, I could hear and see all that passed. When his domestick brought out the remains of dinner, which consisted of bacon and greens, he ordered in the *remove*, and that, both sight and smell informed me, was a small plate of toasted cheese.

Whilst I waited this would-be-great man's leisure, I studied my mode of attack, which, I found, was not to be made in the common way. Pride seemed to be the only vulnerable part about him, and in his own language I determined to address him, even to caricature. At length the dining-room was thrown open for my admission, and behind a small round table was seated a thin, spare figure, in a shabby black coat, buttoned to the chin. On the table were placed two black bottles, with paper labels, on which were written, "*Red*" and "*White*." The white was apparent, and appeared to be milk; the other, in all probability, small beer. A solitary glass stood before him, on a square piece of flannel, which he dignified with the name of a

doiley. Without arising from his chair, he pointed to one opposite, and began:—

“ I am sorry you have been detained ; the dinner-hour amongst persons of distinction is generally known—perhaps it slipped your memory. Pray be seated, and inform me of your business.”

“ It often happens, that when exalted personages have a superabundance of land or buildings, they hold it no degradation to let a part, in order to rid themselves of the incumbrance. This, I understand, sir, is your case, and I should wish to take a part of your premises for a short time, if it meet your approbation.”

This address seemed to give him pleasure, for his countenance brightened; it was, in fact, fanning a flame, which had long raged on the premises, and very much endangered the upper story. Taking off his spectacles, and viewing me with much attention, he replied,

“ Sir, you appear to be a person of distinction; the dignity of your ideas evinces a

noble birth. Pray, honourable sir, what part of my domain have you taken a fancy to, and for what purpose do you want it?"

The important fabrick, I had raised on this man's mind, was on the point of being overthrown; however, I determined to keep up my consequence as much as circumstances would permit.

"It so happens," I replied, "that though my family is both ancient and respectable, I am at present nothing more than manager of a company of comedians, and would wish to take your barn for a theatre."

It is impossible to express the change this declaration produced. Pride and contempt were conspicuous in every line of his countenance; he turned himself in his chair, and with an audible puff, as if something offensive just then stimulated his olfactory nerves, took out a tin snuff-box, and applying a good quantity of common Scotch to his nose, wiped off the falling particles with his *doiley*, and thus addressed me:—

“ Pray, have you brought letters from persons of distinction?”

Now came on the grand trial—I thought, if he could swallow *Sir Peter Teazle*, his stomach would digest any thing.

“ Yes, sir, I have brought a letter from a worthy baronet, who honours me with his patronage.”

“ How! a baronet! oh, that alters the case.” Then examining the seal, which was my own crest, with much ceremony he adjusted his spectacles, and began to read; as he proceeded, I watched his countenance with anxiety, for though I had been weak enough to undertake the deception, to justify it was impossible. My fears were however groundless, he was so blinded by pride, and so in love with grandeur and great folks, that the signature of *Sir Peter Teazle* was sufficient to stamp with truth the greatest fiction.

“ Upon my word,” said he, folding up the letter with great deliberation, “ the baronet

writes in a dignified manner, and I shall not withhold my consent to your request, since supported by such honourable recommendation; not that I am acquainted with the family of the Teazles, though it strikes me, that I have seen the name in print, he is in the house I think, and a firm supporter of Pitt."

"You are right, sir, he belongs to the *house*, he has an host of friends in *pit*, the *gallery* adore him, but he is best supported by *the King*." All these encomiums rivetted my claim to the barn, and he had nearly confirmed it in writing, when the whole door flew open, and who should *hop* in, but old Riggs, my opponent manager, bowing and scraping to the very ground.

Such a breach of etiquette was unpardonable, the offence was heinous, and not to be borne; rising from his chair, he shook the glass bell with such force that out flew the clapper, then stamping his foot exclaimed, "Who are you that thus dare intrude upon my privacy, and without ceremony force yourself into my presence? Had I no servant to announce you?"

Riggs, bowing and cringing with still greater reverence, and in the most fawning manner replied,

“ I hope your *worship* will pardon my *sublime* ignorance, in breaking upon you, in this *spontaneous* kind of a way, but as there was no *sarvent* about I thought as how there could be no great harm in *introdoosing* myself, being, as a body may say, in a kind of a hurry; this *here* bit of a letter will *incense* your honour, of the business I come about, being from parson Rosey of Honiton, who, of his great kindness, has recommended me as a more *properer* person than Davies, being *as how*, my company can *do* plays in a more *spontaneous* way than *he* can.”

The squire took the letter, at the same time looking earnestly at Riggs, whose tye-wig and gold laced waistcoat, in some degree, made amends for the coarseness of his address. My situation all this time was far from enviable, an open exposure of my duplicity seemed unavoidable, but as things had gone thus far, I determined to wait the result. At the conclusion of the letter, this man of family said, “ So it seems you likewise want

to rent one of my out-buildings, his reverence writes with true church dignity, but the recommendation of Sir Peter has a prior claim, and the best answer I can give your friend the vicar, is to send him the baronet's letter, recommending Mr. Romney, who, he says, is nearly allied to a deceased nobleman, and to other persons of high rank and consequence."

He then gave Riggs Sir Peter Teazle's letter, who wiping the perspiration from his forehead in the usual way (that is, with his right thumb), and putting on his spectacles, began to read. The door stood invitingly open, and I once thought of making my escape; but the idea of leaving Riggs master of the field, or rather the barn, was even worse than the shame of being caught thus imposing on the credulity of this proud madman. Riggs had with much trouble spelt through the letter, and was nearly as great a dupe as the other, till the signature of *Peter Teazle* met his eye, he then read it once more, and comprehended the whole. An immediate exposure was the least I expected, and I was fully prepared to acknowledge the imposition, condemn my own

conduct, and at the same time reprobate the insufferable pride, that rendered this man the ridicule of the whole town; when Riggs, throwing a side glance at me, and pressing his tongue to his cheek, to my utter amazement, thus addressed the squire.

“Your worship is right, *Sir Peter Teazle’s* recommendation cannot be slighted, I will return to the vicar and shew him this note.”

Then with a low bow to the squire he hobbled towards the door, and as he passed me, whispered, “I am *up* to your *gossip*, my master.”

The price of the barn was fixed at one guinea per week, and I took my leave. Leaving the house, I encountered Riggs, who waited in the street full of a deeper scheme than I had any idea of; his reason for covering the deception I could not guess, but he soon opened his plan, and I found he possessed more cunning, than appearances warranted me in supposing.

Giving me a hearty slap on the shoulder, he began, “Well my young Lord Ogleby,

how do you do? how's Sir Francis Gripe, and the rest of 'em eh? so Sir Peter Teazle's letter has got you the barn has it? but soft ye a bit, my master, old Riggs is *up to a thing or two*. You've got the start of me with the Justice, but this letter will *do you up* with *Pomposo* yonder, if I return and translate it to him in a *spontaneous* manner; aye, and the whole town will take his part, for tho' he's as proud as Lucifer, and as mad as a bedlamite, the people won't see him imposed upon. So few words are necessary, Master Romney, you have the permission 'tis true, but I can have the barn through this letter, which, if made publick, will knock up your interest in this town for ever; so let us strike a balance; enter into partnership, and divide the profits, or I'll peach, and *blow you up, like a rat in a tin pot*." During this speech, he made so much noise, that I was fearful of a mob, and being a good deal mortified at his conduct, I replied, "Mr. Riggs, you are nearly a stranger to me, and if you were not, this is a kind of language I neither understand, nor will suffer; talk like a gentleman, and I am ready to answer you."

“ Oh, oh ! what you are in the high ropes are you? old Riggs is not company good enough eh? I’m not Sir Francis Gripe, nor Lord Ogleby to be sure, nor I can’t get Sir Peter Teazle to write letters for me, but I’ll tell you what, if I can’t talk fine enough, *here’s* those that will (shaking his purse) the *goldfinches* my boy.” I found I stood no chance with him in mob eloquence, and as the crowd increased, and the laugh went against me, I turned upon my heel, and reached the inn in no very pleasant frame of mind. “ Well,” said Tony, “ what success? *Pomposo* has not pleased you, I see by your countenance.” For once Tony, your conjecture is wrong; I find no fault with *Pomposo*, as you call him, but your noisy friend Riggs has insulted me most grossly.” I then detailed the whole adventure, and concluded by declaring it was my fixed determination to pull him by the nose the first time we met.

“ *Od rabbit it !* leave him to me; I can turn him round my finger; besides, to speak the truth, I think his scheme is not a bad one, indeed you have no alternative, for on

the foundation of this unfortunate letter he'll raise the whole town. Take his offer, his clothes and scenes are respectable, his son is a good actor, his daughters better; and between you and me, Davies's *sticks* and *rags* are (with all deference to your better judgment) but so, so; lay them by as a *corps de reserve*, only to be called out on desperate occasions. Let me beg of you to be silent when Riggs comes in, and see how I'll bring him round."

The heat of the moment was passed; I began to see this adventure in a ludicrous point of view, and to wonder how I had suffered irritation to blind my judgment. I was perfectly of Tony's opinion respecting the junction of the two companies, and should instantly have closed with Riggs's plan, had not his cunning and vulgarity disgusted me, when, in fact, it was his usual and only mode of conversation.

Riggs presently returned, and after conversing apart with Tony, he advanced to me, and holding out his hand, said, "Master Romney, give us your *fist*, you *was* in the

tantrums just now ; why bless your heart, you don't know me ; I like a little *slack jaw* now and then, in a *spontaneous* way, but it's only for amusement ; let's think no more about it, but join *giblets* to *rob* the *natives* here."

I fully comprehended his meaning, and replied, " Mr. Riggs, I believe I was too ready to take offence where none was intended. If you mean by *robbing* the *natives*, to join our theatrical endeavours for mutual advantage, I have no objection, provided the small company now at Brixham obtain employment ; I cannot think of throwing these poor people out of bread, for any advantage that may accrue to myself as an individual."

" What, Davies's *awkward squad* ? with all my heart ; several of my *make-weights* must *mizzle* to make room for 'em that's all."

Matters were soon arranged, Riggs and his mastiff ascended the gig, and Tony mounted the coach, to head up the forces from Brixham, and march them immediately to this place. I remained on the spot, to superintend the carpenter, and engage lodg-

ings upon as economical a plan as possible; this was soon effected though at an inconvenient distance.

CHAP. XXIV.

"THE ROBBERS."

"KOTZEBUE."

"How now, ye secret, dark and midnight hags,
 "What is't ye do?"

"SHAKSPEARE."

ABOUT a quarter of a mile from the town, on the London road, stood a small but neat publick-house, in which I took two rooms at a small rent. On the second evening, as I was returning to my new habitation, about nine o'clock, a shabby looking fellow passed me, but returning immediately, inquired "if I had seen his horse?" without waiting for an answer, he whistled, and out of the hedge sprang two more men; I easily conceived their intention was robbery, if nothing worse, but possessing a tolerable pair of heels, I made a feint to run towards the town, then giving a sudden turn, endeavoured to gain my lodging, and should inevitably have

distanced my pursuers, had I not come in contact with a post, which stood in the centre of the footpath, and threw me with great force on the ground. My fate I thought certain, when a small tilted cart at the moment overtook us. Apprehending little opposition from a single man, who was seated on the shaft, they persevered in their design of stripping me, till a man jumped out of the cart, who for activity, strength, and courage, I never saw equalled, except by Camelford; for although these robbers were armed with bludgeons, my deliverer routed them all, aided by the little assistance the driver was able to give with his whip. As for me, I was so stunned by my fall, as to be unable to reach home without their assistance. My lodging proved likewise to be theirs: in the neat comfortable kitchen were seated two women, whom I found to belong to the new comers. They placed me before the fire, and a surgeon, who was quickly summoned, consoled me by an assurance that my leg was merely bruised, but had suffered no material injury. Restored to a comparative degree of ease, I had time to examine the physiognomies of my companions, and found myself as much puzzled as ever I remember to have been on

a like scrutiny. The men had probably saved my life, and I felt a sensation of gratitude towards them on that account; but it was accompanied with an indescribable something, that made me shudder with horror and suspicion. The lusty man, who had exerted himself so courageously in my defence, was evidently, by his dialect, from Yorkshire; his countenance was handsome and manly, yet there was a something lurking in his eye, which gave me an idea, that however nature might have formed him for truth and honesty, habit had counteracted her decrees. The little man, his companion, exhibited a different physiognomy, and which required no great skill to decypher. To a mean Jew-looking figure, was added a true St. Giles's education, in the display of which he evinced, according to the vulgar phrase, that he was *up to every thing*. The Yorkshireman's wife was a decent, rather good-looking woman, apparently in the last stage of pregnancy. But the other woman—good Heaven! how I shudder, when I reflect on her tremendous figure! she was nearly six feet high, with large black eyes, an hook nose, and cadaverous complexion; the plough of dissipation had made deep furrows in her face; her

dress consisted of a man's great coat and hat; she held a short black pipe in her mouth which was frequently introduced between the bars of the grate, whilst a pewter measure and a glass stood upon a stool at her right hand.

I felt that the society of these people was by no means congenial to my feelings, but an impulse of gratitude rivetted me to the place; accordingly I ordered a regale of the best the house afforded, which gratified their palates and opened their hearts. In the course of conversation I found the terrifick looking Amazon had been a great traveller; that she had followed the camp in different countries, collecting from the dead what they had no longer occasion for.

In fact, till I heard this woman relate her exploits, I scarcely believed there had been wretches, and particularly females, such as Smollet describes in his *Count Fathom*.

As a corroboration of the dangers and hardships she had experienced in her vocation she displayed her bald head, on which were several plates, covering fractures from time to time received. She went by the appellation of *Duchess*, and the little Jew-look-

ing figure, at the end of her narrative, observed,

“ I say, my *Duchess*, you *sacked* the *strangers* rarely abroad, *ven* you *nabbed* their *flesh bags*, and *nimmed* their *tick tacks*; but how *vent* you on with the *mounscers*? *naked work*, hey? not much of the rhino there, *I’s* a notion.”

Quite disgusted with my associates, I pleaded indisposition, and retired to my apartment. In vain I called forth every power of my mind, all my knowledge of the world, to aid my investigation of what these people could be; experience had hitherto brought nothing before me, to elucidate their calling; I had not the smallest reason to suspect their integrity, yet I *did* suspect it; how shall we account for these sudden, apparently improbable suspicions, which take such hold of the human mind, that reason cannot combat them?

I was confined to the house two days, during which time the carpenter had nearly finished the theatre, and though small, it was neat and commodious; the only inconvenience was a want of dressing-rooms, but this

was soon obviated; I waited again upon *Pomposo*, and agreed for half an adjoining cow-house; this the carpenter converted into two dressing-rooms, convenient, but not respectable, for the partition being very unevenly joined, we were frequently amused with the soft nose of a cow, inserted through the division, whose health-restoring breath flowed upon us, more fragrant than all the perfumes of the East. One evening, she not only introduced her nose, but, extending her tongue, swept off pomatum, powder, paint, and all the *et ceteras* of our tragedy queen.

During my two days' confinement, I was regularly visited morning and evening by the Yorkshireman's wife, who in truth appeared a decent, reputable kind of woman. I naturally inquired after her companions; "they were gone," she said, "for a few days a *higgling*," that is, they carried various merchandise about the country in their cart, and sold bargains to farmers' wives, &c. she carried on the same trade in the town, and seemingly with great success, for our landlady informed me, they had prodigious property of various kinds. I had been five days at my lodgings, and from their cheapness and clean-

liness, determined to remain there the whole season. But alas! how little are we acquainted with the book of fate! how short-lived are our most fixed determinations! a circumstance happened that evening, which totally changed my plans, and altered my resolution. The female vender of Manchester goods remained at the publick-house, but her companions were not yet returned. The family had long retired to rest, but Ferdinand Count Fathom kept me awake; I was so involved in the interest produced by this excellent novel, that the clock struck twelve, before I was at all aware of its being so late.

I was in the midst of Smollet's terrifick description of the robber's cottage, when a violent knocking at the house door threw my nerves into such a state of agitation, that I almost fancied myself the Count, and these the robbers returned from plunder. Putting out my candle, I approached the window, which softly opening, I perceived my two deliverers, and the "*duchess*," descend from their caravan, and enter the house.

Whatever is deeply impressed on the imagination, by reading, conversation, or reflec-

tion, immediately previous to retiring, generally continues the partner of our pillow. So it was with me; what I had been reading dwelt upon my mind, and set every somniferous impulse at defiance. About half past one, I heard the party come up stairs, and retire into the only room, except mine, on that floor, and which was occupied by the Yorkshireman's wife. I felt some surprise at this circumstance, particularly when I heard a large wooden bolt slide into its hold. Curiosity is prevalent in every breast, male as well as female; mine was upon the stretch; their characters and appearance had strongly roused it at our first interview, and their retiring to the apartment of the woman, at this late hour, with the precaution of fastening the door, could not tend to lessen it. I crept out of bed, and, cautiously approaching the chamber, through a crevice in the door beheld the whole party seated round a small table, on which was a considerable sum in gold and silver, and a pair of horse-pistols. The Yorkshireman was, apparently, endeavouring to obliterate stains from the blade of a large pocket-knife; the little Jew, and the '*Duchess*' (whose appearance, now, was more terrible than ever, from the addition of a

black eye) were employed in portioning the money into four shares, whilst the conversation ran thus:—

“Rot the knife! it won’t come out—I’ll throw it away,” said the Yorkshireman.

“Throw it to the D——l,” exclaimed the *Duchess*—“take your two shares, and then we’ll proceed to business.”

“Aye, aye,” continued the Jew, “*touch the bit—sack the corianders.*”

The *duchess* now drew something from her pocket, wrapped in a white handkerchief, besmeared with blood. “Here,” said she, “is something that will fetch the *mopusses*, or I’m much mistaken—I knew your knife would never do the job—if I had not thought of the axe, you might have been haggling till now.”

She then produced—I shudder whilst I write it—a human hand (which, from its delicacy, must have belonged to a female) ornamented with a diamond ring. “Dead folks tell no tales, they say, that’s one comfort, or

if they did, their evidence would not be good in law ; so lap up that little fist, and we'll take some safe opportunity to get rid of it."

At the end of this speech, my hair stood erect, my knees smote each other, and it was with difficulty I reached my own room, where I threw myself into bed, in a state of mind not to be conceived by those who have never witnessed a scene like the preceding. I shall not attempt to describe my agitation during this eventful night—to sleep, was impossible ; my feelings were wrought up to a pitch of frenzy ; I had associated with robbers and murderers ! and might be implicated in their guilt.

The moment it was light, I hurried on my clothes, determined to consult a magistrate upon what I had heard and seen, and, if possible, have them secured before they were out of bed. Needless precaution ! they had been gone above two hours. The landlord informed me, they had never been in bed, and only called to leave some orders with the other woman. I inquired if he knew who and what they were. He denied all knowledge of them, but in a manner

which convinced me, he either knew or suspected their *honesty*, though not, perhaps, the full extent of their *guilt*.

After what had passed, and what I suspected, to stay longer in that house, as a lodger, was impossible; I therefore took another nearer the theatre, to which I removed my trunks, but determined to remain on the look-out, in case any of them returned. About four o'clock in the evening, a chaise stopped at the door, from which alighted two men, the sight of whom threw the landlord into a visible state of agitation. They proved to be Searl, the jail-keeper of Exeter, and his follower—the object of their journey, to secure the Yorkshireman's wife.

As soon as I understood who Searl was, and his errand to this place, I related every thing I had heard and knew, but, without any seeming surprise, he answered, “ Sir, I am obligated by your deposition, though you are under a small mistake about the murder. The hand you saw, belonged to a dead woman, who foolishly chose to have her ring buried with her. No, no, if that was the worst, we would forgive 'em, but they have been

upon the pilfering *lay* for some time; *howsoever*, we have *nabb'd* them at last. The woman, and a terrible *Mary* she is, we took in the fact; she had *sack'd* at least an hundred pounds' worth of shopkeepers' goods, whilst her two cullies waited in the street as receivers. There is a fourth belonging to the *gang*, to secure *which*, do you see, is my business here; one of the fellows gave me such a sweating, as I never had before, in all my practice; I used to think myself a match for any man; but this *rum jockey*—it was as much as four of us could do to secure; however, he's safe at last—*Quod's* the word, and I'll forgive him, if he gets away from my clutches, without *axing* my leave." As I entertained an idea, that my fellow-lodger was less culpable than the rest, from her mild deportment and prepossessing appearance, I endeavoured to soften Searl in her behalf, representing, that a woman in her situation was an object of compassion, being in the last stage of pregnancy.

"The last stage of pregnancy!" replied Searl with an arch look—"what a greenhorn you must be! Why, sir, you're *had*; that big belly is made of lace, and other *com-*

bustibles, that she *nims* from shopkeepers, or any body that comes in her way. You may have helped to raise it, for aught I know, if any of your property has come within the reach of her nimble fingers; however, I shall take the liberty, for once in my life, of turning a *cowshure*, as they call it, and, depend upon it, I shall bring forth something of more value than a squalling brat." 'Till nine o'clock I sat with this rough-hewn thief-taker, much amused with stories of pugilistick prowess, and his various success in *nabbing* the *scamps*, as he called it.

At length the woman made her appearance, with the usual rotundity of waist. Searl seizing her arm, dragged her, screaming, into the next room, saying, "Come, mistress, unload;" but they soon returned—he, laden with printed cotton, muslin, &c. and she, much diminished in size. "There, sir," said he, "you see I was right—but we have not a moment to lose;" so placing the woman in the chaise, they drove off to Exeter jail.

END OF VOL. II.

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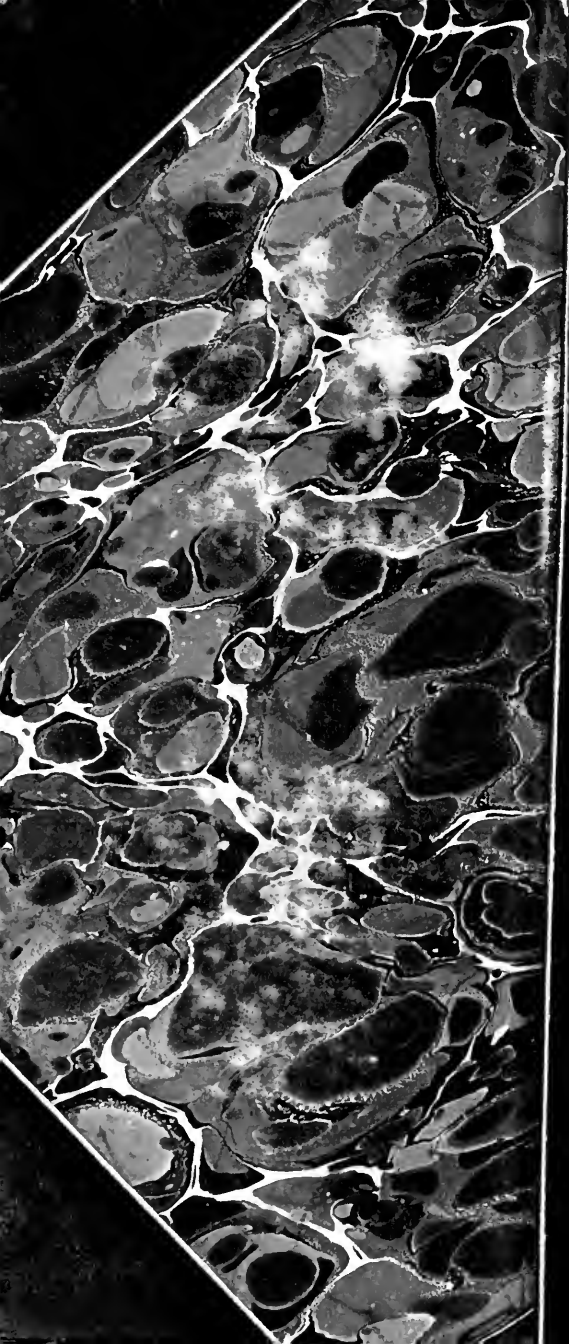
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